



Pastor calls for prayer to rid youth of gangsterism

By Bahle Gama
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AS reports of minors killing each other continue to make headlines in the country, clergies are calling on the nation to unite and turn to God. These pleas follow events of recent weeks where the nation has woken up to news of a minor shooting another to death and another allegedly hitting his neighbour with a hammer on the head until they died.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2



Government mourns Namibia's President Geingob, offers condolences

Page 2



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AS reports of minors killing each other continue to make headlines in the country, clergies are calling on the nation to unite and turn to God. These pleas follow events of recent weeks where the nation has woken up to news of a minor shooting another to death and another allegedly hitting his neighbour with a hammer on the head until they died. It was a similar note over the weekend when news broke of a 14-year-old allegedly laced a Coca-Cola bottle with the deadly Master 900 substance, from which the parents drank, leaving them to fight for their lives in hospital. The minor was apparently irked that the parents did not give her a sum of E100 to attend tutorial classes. The parents are currently undergoing treatment at the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital in Manzini. Preaching during the 2024 prayer for guidance at Mandvulo Grand Hall at Lozitha Royal Place, Reverend Dennis Shongwe said the nation needs to come together to pray and rebuke the spirit of gangsterism that is engulfing minor children in the country to ensure that the young people of Eswatini are saved. He said one of his primary school-going children from church once reported to him that he had been robbed on his way to the restroom by some of his schoolmates who are alleged to be part of a gang. “Our children have numbers now; they are 26s and 28s instead of their names and this is a spirit we must fight as parents and as a

Pastor calls for prayer to rid youth of gangsterism



▲ Reverend Dennis Shongwe said the nation needs to come together to pray and rebuke the spirit of gangsterism that is engulfing minor children in the country to ensure that the young people of Eswatini are saved.

Shongwe said there were gang members in prison who were using those outside of custody to recruit minors to misbehave. Reverend Shongwe further preached about the theme of the prayer which was quoted in Jeremiah 33:3 which he said was God’s promise to emaSwati and everything God intends to give a person; He does through a promise.

He made an example with Abraham who was given the promise to be a father of a nation, however, years went by without a child until he was 99 years old when the Lord told him Sarah would be pregnant with a son. “The nation needs to position itself to receive the promise of God. You need to rise to your place of prayer for God has promised us greater things in 2024. There needs to be

emaSwati who will be aligned and have a good relationship with God. Because God doesn’t hear sinners’ prayer but that of the righteous,” he said. Meanwhile, Reverend Mandla Dlamini said emaSwati need to keep their eyes on the Lord as a leader in 2024. He said the government can try to meet certain levels by benchmarking with the operations of other countries in politics, business, and other sectors, but what matters the most is for Eswatini to look unto God and not to perish. “Let us look beyond democracy and fixate on theocracy. If there is no vision for Jesus, this nation will perish. Even if we are different from all nations, if we decide not to look unto Jesus there will be nothing left of us,” he said. Reverend Dlamini said the youth which happened to be the future of Eswatini stand to perish the most if they are distant from God, thus jeopardizing the state of the country and its future. He referred to Peter who had faith but began to sink upon removing his eyes from Jesus and said that is what will happen to emaSwati if they shift their focus from God. “In 2024, snakes still exist everywhere, including the church, even around His Majesty. It is a blessing to look unto God. Poverty, sickness, and unemployment are rocks that are thrown at emaSwati, but not removing your eyes from Jesus guarantees prosperity,” he added.

Govt mourns Namibia’s President Geingob, offers condolences

Stories By Ncaba Ntshakala

THE Kingdom of Eswatini has joined the international community in expressing its deepest condolences to the Republic of Namibia following the passing of its President. In a letter addressed to the Namibian High Commission in Pretoria, the government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, on behalf of His Majesty King Mswati III, Indlovukazi, the government, and the people of Eswatini, conveyed their heartfelt sympathies. The message of condolences was offered by the Prime Minister Russell Dlamini. “I have it in command by His Majesty King Mswati III, to extend our deepest commiseration on behalf of His Majesty the King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Queen Mother, the Government and People of the Kingdom of Eswatini, to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia on the demise of His Excellency, President Dr Hage G. Geingob,” wrote Prime Minister Russell Dlamini in the letter. “On behalf of His Majesty King Mswati III, Indlovukazi, the government, and the people of Eswatini, I extend our deepest condolences to the government and people of Namibia during this difficult time.” Namibia’s president, Hage Geingob, died early on Sunday in a hospital in the capital, Windhoek, the presidential office said in a statement. He was 82. First elected

president in 2014, Geingob was Namibia’s longest-serving Prime Minister and third president. Namibia is to hold presidential and national assembly elections towards the end of the year. Geingob, who was serving his second term as president, revealed in January that he was receiving treatment for cancer. A biopsy after a routine medical check-up in January had revealed “cancerous cells”, Geingob’s office said at the time. “It is with utmost sadness and regret that I inform you that our beloved Dr Hage G Geingob, the president of the Republic of Namibia has passed on today,” said a statement on Sunday from the Acting President, Nangolo Mbumba. **Mourning** In the letter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation also offered support and solidarity to the Namibian people as they navigate this period of mourning. “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Eswatini avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the High Commission of the Republic of Namibia in Pretoria, the assurances of its highest consideration,” Mbumba said that the President died while at his side was his dear wife Monica Geingos and his children. It is also reported that in 2013, Geingob underwent brain surgery, and in 2023 he underwent an aortic operation in neighbouring South Africa. Up until his death, he had been receiving treatment at Lady Pohamba hospital in Windhoek.



▲ Namibian President Dr Hage G. Geingob is dead.

... Visited Eswatini as Chair of SADC Organ on Politics, Defence & Security Cooperation

AS Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation, the late President Hage Geingob visited Eswatini on a one-day working visit in November 2022. During his visit, Geingob who was entrusted

with the mandate to deal with issues of peace and security in the region paid a courtesy visit to His Majesty King Mswati III where the two leaders discussed bilateral, regional, and continental matters, including the political and security.

Geingob was an anti-apartheid activist, spent three decades in exile

BORN in a village in northern Namibia in 1941, Geingob was its first President outside the Ovambo ethnic group, which makes up more than half of the country’s population. It is said that he took up activism against South Africa’s apartheid regime, which at the time ruled over Namibia, from his early schooling years before being driven into exile. He spent almost three decades in Botswana and the US, leaving the former for the latter in 1964. While in the US, he remained a vocal

advocate for Namibia’s independence, representing the local liberation movement, SWAPO, now the ruling party, at the UN and across the Americas. When SWAPO won the first elections in 1990, Geingob was appointed Prime Minister, a position he held for 12 years before returning to it again in 2012. In 2014, as the party comfortably won yet another vote, riding on the legacy of its role in the liberation struggle, Geingob became president. Hage Geingob also served as SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

Dark days ahead for SA as Moz ends 50-year hydropower pact

By Bahle Gama

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AFTER 50 years of co-existing, South Africa and Mozambique are ending their hydropower pact as the need for electricity in the region continues to surpass the available supply.

Mozambique has detailed its plan in a yet-to-be-published energy transition strategy to end the supply to Eskom, thus raising risks for Africa's most industrialized economy and threatening the viability of the continent's second-biggest aluminium smelter.

The sale agreement has been in place since 1979 when the last turbines were completed. According to the strategy, Mozambique intends to secure 1,150 megawatts (MW) of power it sells to SA from its Cahora Bassa plants for its use.

The strategy states that the main short-term hydro priority is the repatriation of electricity currently exported to SA from Hidroelectrica de Cahora Bassa (HCB) when the contract ends on December 31, 2030.

Bloomberg reported that the decision has created a headache for the two neighbouring countries which are battling with power cuts that result in stagnant economic growth, and South32 (Ltd) which operates Mozal aluminium melter near Maputo, but uses electricity imported from Eskom.

South32 reportedly needs about 900



▲ Cahora Bassa hydropower plant in Mozambique.

MW of electricity for Mozal's output of aluminium, which the company markets as having been made with clean energy. However, because Mozambique's grid is not linked nationally, Mozal cannot get a direct power supply from Cahora Bassa.

Instead, the power plan which is considered Africa's third biggest hydropower sends electricity along 1,400km of transmission lines to Eskom, which then sells power to Mozal.

Bloomberg further reported that past disruptions to supply have worsened power

cuts in SA, especially when violent storms would topple transmission lines.

In the strategy, Mozambique emphasized that HCB is cheap and clean, adding that important decisions would have to be made regarding its clean energy trading end destination.

Mozambique also plans to push for its renewable energy to be used in industrial parks to add value to its production of green minerals such as lithium and graphite.

According to Bloomberg, Eskom was unaware of Mozambique's desire not to

renew their contract, and should it not be renewed, the power utility would have to buy power elsewhere.

Mozambique's South32 would need to find another source of electricity, preferably from renewable sources.

"That's so it won't be subject to European Union taxes on exports under the bloc's carbon border adjustment mechanism, which levies duties on carbon-intensive goods such as fertilizers, cement, iron, steel, and aluminium imported into the bloc," said Bloomberg.

Hage Geingob death: Namibia's new President Mbumba sworn-in hours after predecessor dies

By Wycliffe Muia & Damian Zane

NAMIBIA has a new president in the shape of Nangolo Mbumba just hours after, as vice-president, he had announced the death of his predecessor.

Hage Geingob, 82, died early on Sunday while receiving medical treatment at a hospital in the capital, Windhoek.

A veteran of the country's independence struggle, Mr Geingob had been diagnosed with cancer and revealed the details to the public last month.

The nation had lost a "liberation... icon", Mr Mbumba said.

He has since been sworn-in as Mr Geingob's replacement and will serve in the role until elections due later this year.

"I am not going to be around for the elections so don't panic," he said at a swiftly arranged swearing-in ceremony at state house, just 15 hours after the death of the president.

Paying tribute to his predecessor, he said "our nation remains calm and stable owing to the leadership of President Geingob who was the chief architect of the constitution".

"I take on this heavy mantle cognisant of the weight of responsibility."

Mr Geingob was first sworn-in as president in 2015, but had served in top political positions since independence in 1990.

The exact cause of his death was not given but last month he underwent "a two-day novel treatment for cancerous cells" in the US before flying back home on 31 January, his office had said.

On Namibian radio, people have been sharing memories of someone they described as a visionary as well as a jovial man, who was able to share a joke.

Leaders from around the world have been sending condolence messages with many talking about Mr Geingob's efforts to ensure his country's freedom.

Among them has been Cyril Ramaphosa, president of neighbouring South Africa, who described him as "a towering veteran of Namibia's liberation from colonialism and apartheid".

Mr Geingob, a tall man with a deep, gravelly voice and a commanding presence was a long-serving member of the Swapo party. It led the movement against apartheid South Africa, which had effectively annexed the country, then known as South West Africa, and introduced its system of legalised racism that excluded black people from political and economic power.

Mr Geingob lived in exile for 27 years, spending time in Botswana, the US and the UK, where he studied for a PhD in politics.

He came back to Namibia in 1989, a year before the country gained independence.

"Looking back, the journey of building a new Namibia has been worthwhile," he



▲ President Nangolo Mbumba.

wrote on social media in 2020 while sharing a picture of him kissing the ground on his return.

"Even though we have made a lot of progress in developing our country, more work lies ahead to build an inclusive society."

When Mr Geingob first became president in 2015, he had already been the country's longest-serving prime minister - in the post for 12 years from 1990 and then again for a

shorter stint in 2012.

But going by results at the ballot box, his popularity had declined.

In the 2014 election, he won a huge majority, taking 87% of the vote. But five years later that had fallen to 56%.

Mr Geingob's first term coincided with a stagnant economy and high levels of unemployment and poverty, according to the World Bank.

His party also faced a number of corruption scandals during his time in office. This included what became known as "fishrot", where ministers and top officials were accused of taking bribes in exchange for the awarding of lucrative fishing quotas.

By 2021, three-quarters of the population thought that the country was going in the wrong direction, a three-fold increase since 2014, according to independent polling organisation Afrobarometer.

Three decades after independence, the heroic narrative of Swapo having liberated the country was losing its appeal among a generation born after the event, long-time observer of Namibian politics Henning Melber wrote in 2021.

Swapo, in power since independence, had chosen Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as its presidential candidate for November's planned elections.

She has now been appointed vice-president and will become the country's first female president if she wins. (BBC)

DPM visits Luke Commission, celebrates restored sight for hundreds

Stories By Ncaba Ntshakala

IN a heartwarming visit to The Luke Commission in Sidvokodvo, Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla paid her respects to the organization and witnessed firsthand the life-changing impact of their recent Comprehensive and Surgical Eye Services (CARES) high-volume surgical session. During her visit, the Deputy Prime Minister met with representatives of The Luke

Commission and commended their tireless efforts in providing sight-restoring surgeries to those in need. She also had the opportunity to interact with patients who had recently undergone successful procedures, many of whom expressed their immense gratitude for regaining their vision. The CARES initiative, a collaborative effort between The Luke Commission and various stakeholders, aimed to address the significant backlog of eye care needs in Eswatini. Over a short period, a staggering 400 patients received surgeries for various eye problems, restoring their sight and offering them a renewed lease on life.

Over 400 get sight-restoring surgeries

THE Luke Commission (TLC) has completed over 400 successful eye surgeries in just one week. This intensive campaign, held at the organization's Miracle Campus, offered Eswatini citizens hope and restored vision to hundreds struggling with blindness and impaired sight. The surgeries encompassed a range of procedures, including cataract removals, cornea transplants, corrective surgery for strabismus (emasoli), and other sight-restoring interventions. Each operation represents a chance for individuals to reclaim their independence, reconnect with loved ones, and experience the world anew. TLC Executive Director Echo VanderWal expressed his appreciation on the success of the initiative. "We are so grateful to God, who brings sight to the blind," said Echo VanderWal. "To see sight restored—it's just so beautiful. Lives are forever changed for the better in a span of just a few days. These are miracles of biblical proportions." TLC highlighted that so far, the surgical session has included cataract removals, cornea transplants, strabismus (emasoli) corrections, and 37 other surgeries. Six specialists and surgeons are joining over 200 TLC staff for the surgical session. Executive Director VanderWal said that of the patients treated last week, the youngest was a five-month-old baby and the oldest

was a 98-year-old grandmother. The cases were part of TLC's CARES (Comprehensive and Restorative Eye Services) surgical session included 69 surgeries for children, including many with emasoli. One mother of a 10-month-old with "emasoli" who received an operation at TLC recalled how she had worried about how her son would live with emasoli. "The one thing that pained my heart the most was that whenever people saw my baby they would ask, 'What's wrong with your baby—he looks shocked. What's wrong, is he deformed?'" said the Mother. "This was very painful to me as a parent because I imagined how his school life will look like. He would be a laughing stock to the other kids." Love Another parent of a child who received help said, "On behalf of all the mothers who have children, we are saying thank you very much to The Luke Commission for everything they have done for us, from taking care of us, to giving us food, giving us love and care and they have also helped our children, they are all jumping, smiling and happy." VanderWal added that these surgeries transform the futures of every patient. "These surgeries delete years of future pain for patients," said VanderWal. "We are so honoured that we get to help be a part of transforming lives." Bongani Mdluli, who received surgery



▲ DPM Thulisile Dladla with Luke Commission officials during her visit.



▲ TLC Team performing surgery in one of the patients.

during the surgical session, said, "I would like to thank His Majesty King Mswati III, and the Queen Mother, and everyone who has been instrumental in bringing this very helpful institution to Eswatini to help every Liswati from all four regions." "To the workers of here at TLC, thank you very much. Throughout my stay here, I haven't heard even one person complain of being treated poorly. Please continue treating everyone you will touch with the

humility, respect and love I have seen you treat us with this week. We were treated very well. You loved those that are even hard to love, those not kind towards you but you remained kind—thank you very much," Mdluli added. The hospital further said that as part of the year-round CARES programme, TLC hosts high-volume surgical sessions for eye care several times each year. For more information about CARES, TLC urged emaSwati to call 7613 8814.

ETA encourages domestic tourism in the month of February

By Nokunceda Magagula
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THE Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) has issued a call to promote domestic tourism during the month of February, while discouraging Eswatini citizens from traveling to other countries, especially during this month of love. According to ETA marketing officer Chunky Mdluli, this year they have taken a different approach by considering the interests of people who frequently utilize digital platforms. They have identified that individuals are searching for Valentine's Day specials and ideas for activities they can enjoy during this month. ETA emphasizes that February is not solely about the 14th but is a month dedicated to love. Therefore, they aim to make it easier for people to find information about relevant activities and offerings. To achieve this, they are leveraging

their social media platforms and websites. Mdluli stated that their focus is primarily on profiling various establishments. With over 100 establishments offering Valentine's Day specials, including accommodations, lunch and breakfast options, and celebrations, they want people to easily access this information. She added, "Some establishments have specifically released specials for this month, and we want people to have effortless access to that information. We want the nation to be free from concerns regarding information gathering, as it is now readily available on digital platforms. By visiting our social media pages, individuals will discover the places they can visit without any difficulties." "Our objective is to promote domestic tourism for the people of Eswatini, and when we say 'Love Eswatini,' we mean everything that our country has to offer. While we are not solely focusing on Valentine's Day this month, we are also highlighting our Buganu ceremony, which is expected to attract more visitors to the

country" Mdluli said. "As people prepare to attend the Buganu ceremony, we encourage them to engage in activities along the way. Ngwenya Glass, Malolotja, and Hawane are some of the attractions along their journey, and we are pleased to announce that special offerings have already begun," she explains. Mdluli further revealed that they will also be promoting the Easter campaign this month to encourage Eswatini citizens to stay and travel within the country. Additionally, they anticipate an increase in visitors from Mozambique due to the festival that resonates with them. As the country continues to recover from the effects of COVID-19, ETA aims to divert tourists who are already in the country to extend their stay, particularly those who are in the region for specific occasions. Eswatini boasts unique cultural events such as Umhlanga, Incwala, and Buganu, which play a significant role in their marketing efforts.



▲ Chunky Mdluli Makerting Officer of Eswatini Tourism Authority.

Man defrauded over E200k in fake precious stones deal

By Bahle Gama
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A man was defrauded over E200 000 in a phoney sale of precious stones.

This information is contained in a bail application by the suspect in question who denied the allegations.

The suspect is 38-year-old Nhlanhla Maphanga Dlamini of Moneni who is accused of defrauding Breandan Dillon Steward of E229,800 after he had allegedly promised to sell the precious stones to him

Dlamini told the court that on January 12, 2022, he received a call from a friend identified as Mlandvo Dlamini who informed him that they had received a tender to supply river sand and needed a person who owned trucks.

Dlamini said he informed Mlandvo that he did not know anyone who owned or was in the truck transportation business, however, his friend said he had already found one. This according to the suspect was the complainant, Steward, whom he said was unknown to him.



▲38-year-old Nhlanhla Maphanga Dlamini of Moneni is accused of defrauding Breandan Dillon Steward E229,800 by promising to sell precious stones to him.

Mlandvo asked Dlamini to accompany him to a meeting because he would be of great assistance because of his business skills.

“We drove to Lozitha where we met with the complainant, and from there we drove him to Royal Vilas. It was there that Mlandvo changed tune and started talking about precious stones that were not known to me,” Dlamini submitted.

He alleged that they were with

another man who took out the stones and showed Steward and explained that they were of value.

Dlamini said he was taken aback because he thought he was attending a meeting regarding the transportation of river sand.

Steward reportedly sounded interested in the stones and a deal was concluded to make the purchase from Mlandvo. They exchanged details and how payment would be made and that was the

last time Dlamini heard of the matter.

He submitted to the court that months later he heard that Mlandvo and an unidentified man were arrested and charged with theft by false pretences in respect of the matter.

This was around June 2023, and they were granted bail.

“I was not bothered because I was not involved in any payments in respect to this matter,” Dlamini

said. The suspect said he was therefore surprised when he was arrested six months later after the perpetrators had been arrested and charged with the offence.

In his bail application, Dlamini told the court he is self-employed, does piece jobs and has a wife and three minor children who are solely dependent on him.

Therefore, his continued incarceration would be detrimental to the livelihood of his family as his children are school-going and his wife is unemployed.

Dlamini undertook to adhere to all bail conditions, adding that there was no likelihood he would abscond trial or skip the country as he is firmly rooted in Eswatini and has no relatives outside the country.

“I am advised that the Police have completed their investigations in the matter and therefore my release on bail will not cause the Crown any prejudice, in particular because the perpetrators of this offence were granted bail by the Honourable Court,” he submitted.

Bail was granted at E50,000 and Dlamini was ordered to pay E5,000 cash and the rest as surety.



▲Traffic police officers helping pupils cross the road.

REPS pledges more action as school openings bring busier roads

Stories By Ncaba Ntshakala

WITH the start of school in the past weeks, the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has renewed its commitment to enhancing road safety and minimizing traffic accidents across the country.

The increased traffic volume, particularly around schools with students traveling to and from classes, necessitates extra vigilance from all road users.

“Our operational mantra for the year, ‘Combating Crime and Road Traffic Accidents Through Robust Police Action In Partnership with the Public,’ underscores our dedication to tackling road accidents, especially fatalities,” emphasized REPS in a shared statement on the Facebook page. They urge all road users to prioritize caution, strictly adhere to traffic laws, and cooperate with police officers enforcing regulations.

The REPS believes that collaboration and respect among all road users are crucial in preventing accidents. This includes ensuring fair use of the roads for both motorists and pedestrians. Reckless driving, driving under the influence, and pedestrians neglecting designated crossings remain

leading causes of accidents, highlighting the need for collective responsibility.

Parents and schools are urged to play their part in ensuring children’s safety. Parents should carefully choose school transport providers (“bomalume”) who adhere to traffic rules, maintain roadworthy vehicles, and avoid overloading. Schools can contribute by educating students about road safety and pedestrian best practices. Pedestrians are reminded to prioritize designated crossings like overhead bridges and zebra crossings for their own safety. By being mindful and responsible, they can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Safer roads REPS emphasizes that achieving safer roads requires a united effort from all stakeholders. By prioritizing caution, respecting traffic regulations, and cooperating with authorities, every individual can contribute to creating a safer environment for all road users in Eswatini.

Tips for safety on roads

- Drive cautiously, especially around schools.
- Always follow traffic laws and regulations.
- Cooperate with police officers enforcing compliance.
- Pedestrians: Use designated crossings for your safety.
- Parents: Ensure safe school transport for your children.

REPS highlights Prime Minister’s call on praying for law enforcers

The Royal Eswatini Police Services (REPS) shared on their Facebook page that Prime Minister Russell Dlamini urged the nation to rally behind the police force through prayer.

This call came during the REPS Christian Association’s annual prayer held at Matsapha Police College last week, where the Prime Minister was represented by Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla.

The Prime Minister urged the nation to rally behind the Royal Eswatini Police Services through prayer and other means as they work towards said the nation must pray for the Police Service and seek the Lord to guide and protect the REPS as they go about their daily mandate of fighting crime. He said it is important that the Police Service be prayed for as their daily duties are challenging.

He also said the annual service by the REPS is a testimony that the organisation is cognisant of the fact that God is the centre of everything as the bible says that ‘whosoever watches over the city devoid of the Lord’s presence, watches in vain. The REPS prayer service is an annu-

al event that has been held since 1995 and this year’s theme was “Be your brother’s keeper” extracted from Genesis 4 v 9 “Let me declare here and now brethren, there is no weapon formed against us that will prosper, as long as we look out for each other, pray for love and peace, embrace our Christian beliefs and values then we shall overcome all obstacles the enemy may lay on our path.”

The PM reiterated Government’s commitment to making Eswatini a safe and attractive destination that is conducive for investment. He said it the country is safe for investment, it will translate to the socio-economic development for Emaswati. He said corruption has been identified as one of the major stumbling blocks towards economic recovery and social cohesion and the Police Service has a pivotal role to play in the suppression and uprooting this scourge.

“I entreat upon you Police officers, and every responsible liSwati, to play their part in ensuring that all forms of this despicable act are reported to the relevant agencies like the Police and Anti-Corruption Unit for the law to take its course and right some of these Institutionalised wrongs.” Expressed the Prime Minister.



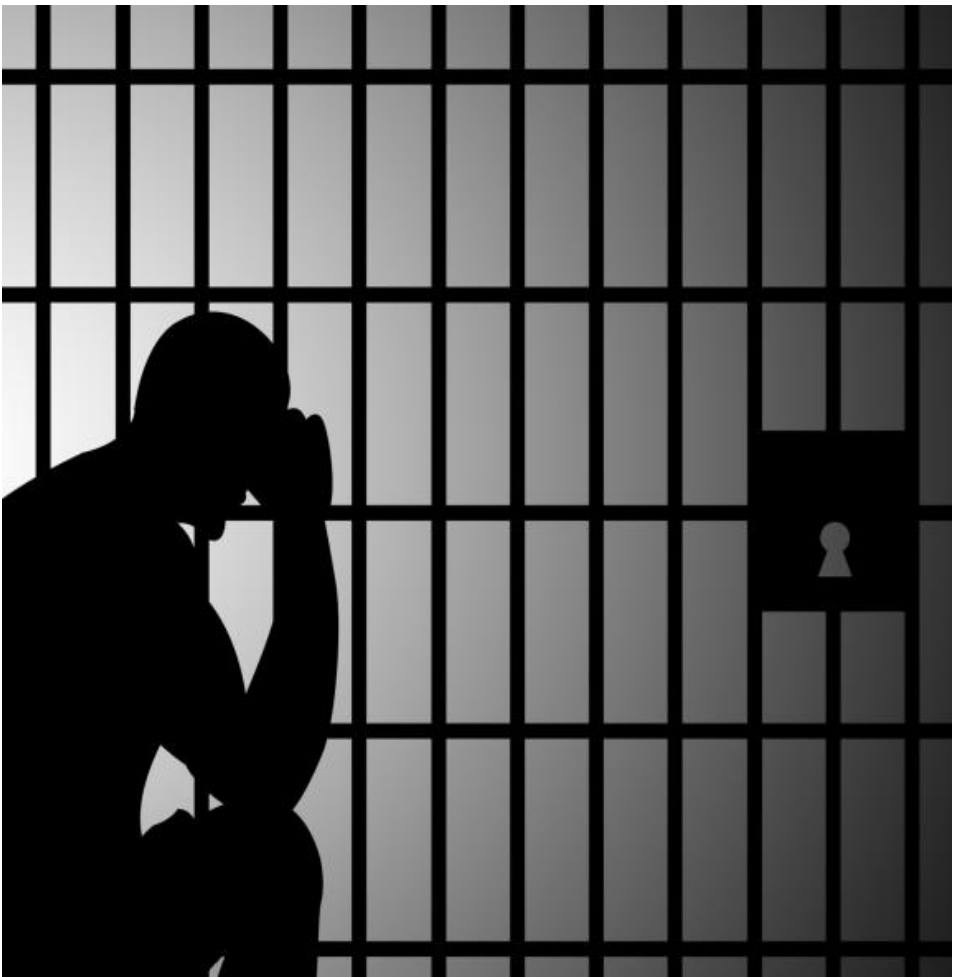
▲Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla.

Man stabbed 11 times on the head over two cellphones

Stories By Nokunceda Magagula
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A 23-year-old man from Mahlanya was brutally stabbed 11 times on the head by Bonkhe Magongo, who allegedly robbed him of two cellphones. Magongo, the accused for this heinous act, was apprehended by police officers from Lobamba. Following his arrest, he appeared before Magistrate Thembela Simelane at the Mbabane Magistrate’s Court on Friday. It is alleged that the accused robbed and assaulted Masibekela Mduli with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm. He allegedly stabbed Mduli eleven times on the head. Additionally, Magongo faces a charge of assault against Samsom Khumalo, which occurred on a separate occasion. It is alleged that Magongo assaulted Khumalo with a sharp object, causing injury to his ear. Magongo’s charge sheet indicates that he is facing two counts: robbery and assault with intent to cause grievous harm. He is also

charged with assaulting Samsom Khumalo on a different day by using a sharp object on Khumalo’s ear. Count one states that on December 25, 2024, at Esitjeni in Lobamba, Magongo unlawfully robbed Masibekela Mduli of E5,600. It is alleged that the accused stabbed the victim eleven times on the head with a knife, in order to force the victim to surrender his cellphones. “The accused unlawfully and forcefully robbed the victim on December 25, 2024, at Esitjeni area in the Hhohho region. He stabbed the victim eleven times on the head with a knife to subdue him, subsequently taking his two Mobicel cellphones,” reads the charge sheet. Count two states that Magongo is charged with common assault. It is alleged that on January 28, 2024, at Esitjeni area in the Hhohho district, the accused unlawfully assaulted the victim by using a sharp object on the victim’s ear. During the court proceedings, the prosecution requested that the accused be held in custody until February 9, 2024, pending the determination of his trial date.



▲Bonkhe Magongo was arrested for injuring two individuals on separate occasions.

Two men charged with SODVA, after assaulting their partners

The Mbabane Magistrate’s Court heard two cases of men alleged to have assaulted their intimate partners on Friday. The two men accused of assault are Cebisa Mamba (33) and Nhlanhla Mashinini (40). Mamba was the first to be called into the accused dock and represented himself. The crown stated that he has been charged with contravening Section 77(1) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018. According to Mamba’s charge sheet, on February 1, 2024, at Mvawkwelitje area in the Hhohho region, Mamba unlawfully assaulted his girlfriend by violently hitting her on the face by head-butting her. The accused pleaded guilty to the charge. In his mitigation statement, the accused explained why he assaulted his girlfriend, stating that an hour before the incident, he had called her on her cellphone numerous times, but she did not answer. As a result, he decided to go to her place. Upon arriving, she was unable to provide

a clear explanation for not answering her phone, which made him angry and led to the assault. The accused pleaded with the court for leniency when sentencing him, citing that he is a first-time offender and will never commit a crime again. Magistrate Thembela Simelane sentenced Mamba to 10 months imprisonment or a fine of E1,000. Following Mamba’s case, Mashinini was called into the accused dock. The charges against him also involved contravening Section 77(1) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018. According to his charge sheet, on January 31, 2024, in the Elangeni area, Mashinini unlawfully threatened to kill his girlfriend by expressing his intention to harm her, thereby contravening the aforementioned Act. The accused pleaded guilty to the offence. In his mitigation statement, he requested leniency from the court, emphasizing that he is a first-time offender. As a result, he was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment or a fine of E1,500.



▲A man and a woman were charged with shoplifting at Pick n’ Pay.

2 charged with shoplifting at Pick n’ Pay

IN two separate incidents, a man and a woman have been charged with shoplifting at Pick n’ Pay, collectively stealing items worth a total of E841. The first accused is Nolwazi Dlamini from Mshingishingini. Dlamini is said to have stolen baby milk valued at E300. Her charge sheet states that on February 1, 2024, at the Mbabane Pick n’ Pay branch, Dlamini unlawfully and intentionally stole a Nespray 400 grams valued at E130 and a Nespray 600 grams valued at E170. During the court proceedings, the charges were read to Dlamini, and she pleaded guilty to the offense of theft. As a result, she was found guilty. In her mitigation statement, the accused informed the court that she stole the items because her 4-month-old infant was starving, and she did not have the money to purchase the necessary items. She emphasized that she is a first-time offender and requested the court to consider this when determining her sentence.

Upon hearing this, Magistrate Thembela Simelane acknowledged that the accused is a first-time offender and recognized the circumsta However, a crime was still committed and required punishment. Dlamini was subsequently sentenced to 5 months of imprisonment or a fine of E600. The sentence was suspended for 18 months. Thulasizwe Barley from Manzini is also charged with theft after stealing two Gallo Classico olive oil bottles valued at E258 and E282, respectively. His charge sheet states that on February 1, 2024, at the Pick n’ Pay Mbabane branch, the accused intentionally stole various items worth E541. Barley pleaded guilty to the offense, and in his mitigation statement, he expressed remorse for his actions. He requested leniency from the court when determining his sentence. He was sentenced to 6 months of imprisonment or a fine of E600.



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Prime Trading, All Pro Distributors bag E397 000 ESWACAA tender

PRIME Trading and All Pro Distributors have bagged a tender worth E397 000 from Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACAA) for the supply of personal protective equipment. According to the intention to award issued by ESPPRA on their website, Prime Trading was awarded tender for schedule A worth E91 444, while All Pro Distributors was awarded for Schedule B worth E165 295, and schedule C worth E140 816.

EHB tender shortlist opportunity for suppliers

ESWATINI Housing Board (EHB) has invited proposals from eligible and reputable suppliers of goods and services who wish to be shortlisted into the organization's preferred vendor list for the financial year period 2024/2025 to 2025/2026. According to the Request for proposals (RFP) the categories are 13 in total which include supply of concrete products, Supply of Aggregates (River Sand, Plaster), Air-condition Services, and Supply of Promotional Products and Branding.

'CMA CGM halts Red Sea transit on security risks'

PARIS — Shipping group CMA CGM on Friday suspended until further notice all crossings by its vessels of the Bab al-Mandab Strait in and out of the Red Sea due to security risks, a source familiar with the matter said. The decision was taken after the latest attacks on vessels by Houthi militants in Yemen, including the targetting this week of a convoy containing CMA CGM-operated ships, the source said.

Assets Under Advisory stand at E25.62 billion in second quarter of 2023

By Silindzelwe Nxumalo
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Assets Under Advisory (AUA) stood at E25.62 billion in the second quarter of 2023.

According to the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) quarterly statistical bulletin for the second quarter of 2023, this indicated an increase of 4.24 per cent when compared to the previous quarter, a year-on-year comparison indicates a 2.15 per cent decrease.

The bulletin stated that the advisory had allocated E8.35 billion of the funds in the domestic market, E12.88 billion in the Common Monetary Area, and E4.40 billion offshore.

It also reported that the retail investors are steadily tapping into the advisory space, as they provided 2.16 per cent of the funds, an increase from 1.77 per cent in the previous quarter.

The report stated that retirement funds continue to be the largest source of funds as they owned 81.01 per cent of the funds under advisory, a slight decrease from the previous quarter as it stood at 81.15 per cent.

"Long-term insurers assets accounted for 6.12 per cent of the funds an increase when compared to the last quarter where it stood at 0.22 per cent, and companies had the biggest upset as they moved from 10.02 per cent in the previous quarter to 2.40 per cent in the current period," read part of the bulletin.

Figure 10: Value of Assets under Advisory

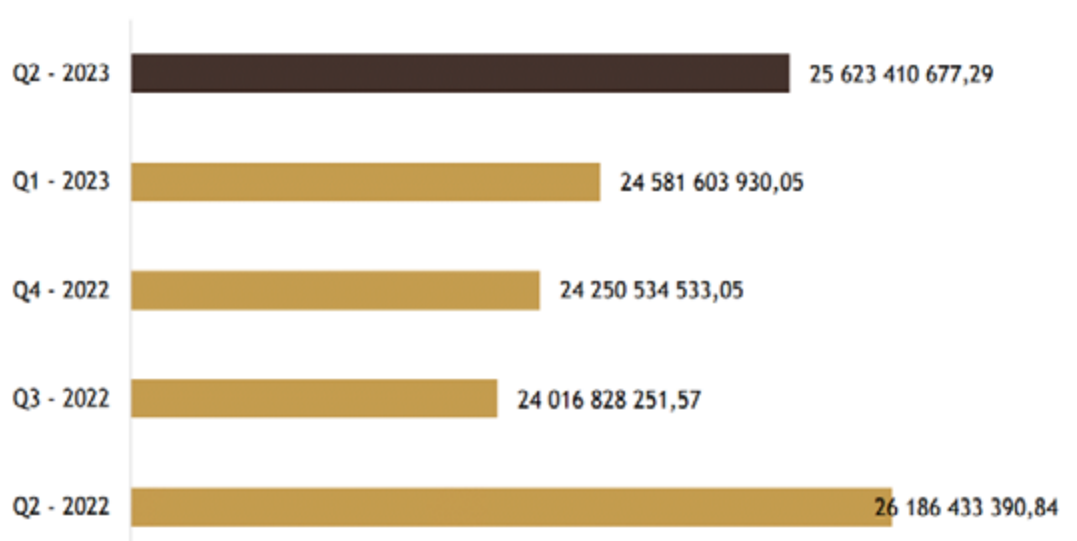
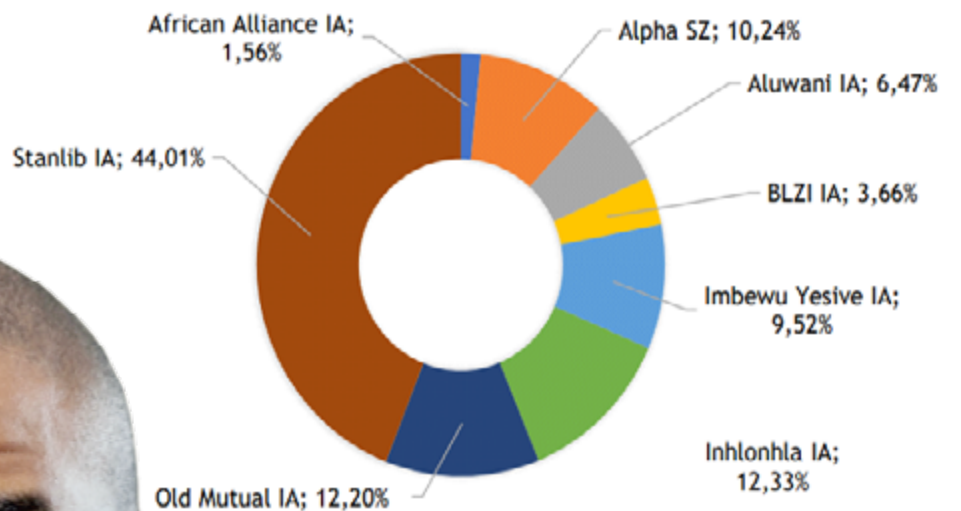


Figure 12 - Market Share in terms of AUA



The report stated that Stanlib continued to dominate the assets under advisory as it controlled 44.01 per cent of the total assets.

The bulletin also reported that a year-on-year

comparison shows an increase as Stanlib had 43.40 per cent of the assets last year over the same period, and a quarter-on-quarter comparison indicates it held 43.37 per cent as of March 31, 2023.

"Inhlonhla which currently manages 12.33 per cent in the current 'period, was managing 12.87 per cent in the previous quarter, which indicates a slight decline. A year-on-year comparison indicates that Inhlonhla had 13.06 per cent of the total assets which is higher than the period under review," read part of the .

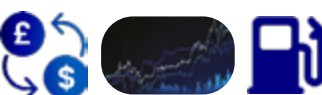
Old Mutual had 12.20% of the total assets, in the current period, and when compared to the previous period it had 12.60% of the total assets indicating a decline between the two periods, with a look at the year-on-year comparison we note that they had 11.77% indicating an increase when compared to the period at hand.

► FSRA CEO
Ncamiso
Ntshalintshali.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.1840	18.6910
G.B. Pound	23.1310	23.8141
EURO	19.7705	20.3822
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	



Prime Trading, All Pro Distributors bag E397 000 ESWACAA tender

Stories by Silindzelwe Nxumalo
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PRIME Trading and All Pro Distributors have bagged a tender worth E397 000 from Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACAA) for the supply of personal protective equipment.

According to the intention to award issued by ESPPRA on their website, Prime Trading was awarded tender for schedule A worth E91 444, while All Pro Distributors was awarded for Schedule B worth E165 295, and schedule C worth E140 816.

The tenderers were awarded in terms of section 45 of the Public Procurement Act No. 7 of 2011 (the Act), following a competitive bidding process, and scored 91.37 per cent beating 15 other tenderers.

“In terms of sections 45(4), 46, and 47 of the Act, all tenderers who submitted bids are hereby notified that a period of ten (10) working days is hereby allowed for the submission of any application for review from the above-stated date of first publication of this notice,” read the intension.



According to the request for proposal (RFP) ESWACAA issued the Tendering Documents for the supply of Goods and Related Services incidental thereto as specified in Section VI, Schedule of Requirements.

The RFP stated that the name and identification number of this procurement are specified in the TDS, and the name, identification, and number of lots of are provided in the TDS.

The RFP also stated that a Tenderer, and all parties constituting the Tenderer, may have the nationality of any country, subject to the restrictions specified in Section V,

Eligible Countries.
“A Tenderer shall be deemed to have the nationality of a country if the Tenderer is a citizen or is constituted, incorporated, or registered and operates in conformity with the provisions of the laws of that country. This criterion shall also apply to the determination of the nationality of proposed subcontractors or Tenderers for any part of the Contract including Related Services,” read part of the RFP.
It is also said that all the Goods and Related Services to be supplied under the Contract and financed by Government may have their origin in any country in accordance with

Section V, Eligible Countries.
“For purposes of this Clause, the term “goods” includes commodities, raw material, machinery, equipment, and industrial plants; and “related services” includes services such as insurance, installation, training, and initial maintenance,” read the RFP.
The Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACAA) is a statutory body that was established by the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini through an Act of Parliament, the Civil Aviation Authority Act No.10 of 2009, and became operational on December 7, 2009.
The Authority is a renowned safe and secure aviation industry regulator, an airports operator and an air navigation services provider that facilitates economic development.
As civil aviation is a very technical and heavily regulated global industry, it became necessary to establish an autonomous body that would focus on the growth and professional management of the industry and have the Ministry of Public Works and Transport as its oversight.
ESWACAA manages King Mswati III International Airport, Matsapha Airport, and the Nhlangano Airstrip.

Opportunity for suppliers to be shortlisted for EHB preferred vendor list

ESWATINI Housing Board (EHB) has invited proposals from eligible and reputable suppliers of goods and services who wish to be shortlisted into the organization’s preferred vendor list for the financial year period 2024/2025 to 2025/2026.
According to the Request for proposals (RFP) the categories are 13 in total which include supply of concrete products, Supply of Aggregates (River Sand, Plaster), Air-condition Services, and Supply of

Promotional Products and Branding.
The RFP stated that tender documents must be returned to the EHB and deposited in the designated tender box at the 5th floor Sibekelo Building EHB reception on or before 12:00 noon on February 9, 2024.
“Tender submissions should be in a sealed envelope marked with the “Tender name” and “procurement category”. Late, facsimile and emailed tenders will not be considered,” read part of the RFP.
The RFP also states that tenderers have an obligation to disclose any situation of



actual or potential conflict that impacts their capacity to serve the best interest of the Client, or that may reasonably be perceived as having this effect.
“Failure to disclose said situations may lead to the disqualification of the tenderer or

the termination of its Contract,” read part of the RFP.
The RFP further stated that all enquiries relating to this pre-qualification may be addressed to the Procurement Office at: tendering@ehb.co.sz.
“Clarifications may be requested not later than Friday, 2 nd February 2024. To ensure that all Tenderers receive the same information, answers to questions asked by any one of the Tenderers shall be provided to all Tenderers without disclosing the identity of the Tenderer who posed the question,” read part of the RFP.
Commencement date Expected date for commencement of services is April 1, 2024.
The Eswatini Housing Board (EHB) is a Category a Public Enterprise that reports to the government through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD).

‘CMA CGM halts Red Sea transit on security risks’

PARIS — Shipping group CMA CGM on Friday suspended until further notice all crossings by its vessels of the Bab al-Mandab Strait in and out of the Red Sea due to security risks, a source familiar with the matter said.
The decision was taken after the latest attacks on vessels by Houthi militants in Yemen, including the targeting this week of a convoy containing CMA CGM-operated ships, the source said.
The move means CMA CGM joins other major shipping firms in suspending transit through the southern Red Sea, disrupting the main route for trade between Asia and Europe.
CMA CGM, one of the world’s largest container shipping lines, has already redirected some of its services around southern Africa but had continued to send some ships through the Red Sea, notably supported by French navy escorts.



▲ Containers are seen stacked up on the container ship CMA CGM Benjamin Franklin at the port of Antwerp, Belgium.

How a rollercoaster week left Boeing's credibility on the line

BOEING is reeling from a week of turmoil that has snagged production and development timelines and tested confidence in CEO Dave Calhoun almost a month after the mid-air blowout of a dummy door on a 737 MAX 9, industry insiders said.

From Seattle where 737s are built, to Washington where they are regulated and Dublin, centre of the air finance world, the company has faced a perfect storm of competing pressures.

In just eight days, Boeing has seen an unprecedented ceiling on 737 production growth imposed by regulators, bowed to lawmaker pressure to drop a request for a temporary exemption from design rules for its next model and faced a possible revolt by a top customer.

The tumult is not over. U.S. investigators are soon expected to release a preliminary report on the Jan. 5 Alaska Airlines blowout after visiting the 737 factory last Friday.

The head of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will appear at a U.S. House hearing on Tuesday and Calhoun may face lawmakers in a hearing as early as March. The FAA will be asked whether it found "persistent" quality issues, according to a preparatory letter reported by Reuters.

Industry experts said the period is shaping up as a critical test of management's ability to overcome Boeing's latest crisis amid efforts to be more open than lawyer-crafted responses to MAX crashes that killed 346 people in 2018 and 2019.

"What they need to do now is restore credibility with the FAA and customers, and obviously somebody will have to pay the price," said Adam Pilarski, senior vice-president at Avitas and former chief economist at Douglas Aircraft, now part of Boeing.

"I can't see how the CEO can survive and how he should survive," the well-known industry veteran told Reuters.

A Boeing spokesperson said the company had no comment on industry speculation.

Some respite came with quarterly earnings on Wednesday when Boeing said 737 output reached a higher level than feared before



▲A Boeing 737 MAX 7 aircraft piloted by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Chief Steve Dickson lands during an evaluation flight at Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington, U.S.

getting capped.

But a frosty exchange between Bank of America analyst Ron Epstein and Calhoun exposed a sensitive issue likely to dominate hearings: Why it had taken until now, following a near-disaster, to step up quality checks five years after crashes placed the MAX factories under intense scrutiny.

"I'm still trying to get my head around how we got here," Epstein said on the post-earnings analyst call. "Wasn't the 737 line like the most scrutinized production line in the world?"

Calhoun said he took exception to the premise and quality data had improved, though such problems should never happen.

Scrutiny 'will make us better'

After a decade on Boeing's board, Calhoun took over as CEO in 2020, promising to regain trust after the earlier MAX crisis.

But his longevity has raised questions about whether he can distance himself from the company's past and carry out the changes needed for Boeing to regain its stature.

In a Jan. 31 letter to employees released by Boeing, Calhoun said "increased scrutiny –

whether from ourselves, from our regulator, or from others – will make us better."

Speculation of a shake-up intensified this week after the company withdrew a request for a safety exemption that could have accelerated certification of its next plane, the 737 MAX 7.

While the decision was taken under pressure from lawmakers, it left questions over Boeing's handling of core customers like Southwest Airlines the largest customer for the MAX 7, and raised questions about the timing of a MAX 10 sister model.

Boeing's desire to certify the MAX 7 with a temporary waiver while it designed an improved anti-icing system unravelled as the industry's power brokers gathered for their annual Airline Economics finance summit in Dublin.

When Dublin speaks, planemakers take notice. In 2012, Airbus dispatched a top executive to allay lessor concerns about A380 wing cracks.

This week, however, public reaction was muted. Leasing CEOs backed Boeing management, and the head of budget carrier Ryanair defended Calhoun, offering to take

MAX 10 orders dropped by other airlines after Reuters reported that United Airlines had approached rival Airbus.

"There's no point piling on because they couldn't feel it any more intensely probably than they do right now," Aviation Capital Group CEO Thomas Baker told Reuters.

But on the sidelines of the conference, the mood was more sombre and discussion of changes at Boeing or its commercial unit was rife. The abruptness of the MAX 7 U-turn took many by surprise, after Calhoun previously said the application would not be withdrawn. Airlines scrambled to understand what it would mean for the more widely sold MAX 10, next in the pipeline.

Although the MAX 7 redesign focuses on potential debris from an engine case in the event of an anti-icing failure, delegates questioned whether that could indirectly affect other systems in a tougher regulatory climate.

"It could be a can of worms," one MAX customer told Reuters.

Boeing told analysts it would not get into "what ifs" on the larger MAX 10, with Chief Financial Officer Brian West saying it will be certified when the FAA decides.

Some industry officials blamed the decision to backtrack on a misfired attempt by Boeing to lobby its way around regulation – including visits by Calhoun to several lawmakers – ahead of a yet-to-be-scheduled Senate Commerce Committee hearing.

Other industry officials told Reuters after the Alaska incident there was little to no chance in the current climate the FAA would have approved the exemption.

Calhoun's decision followed a 90-minute meeting last week with Senator Tammy Duckworth, who heads the Commerce Committee's aviation safety subcommittee. He defended his visit to lawmakers, adding he had been swayed by "sound, principled argument."

Duckworth told Reuters she appreciated Calhoun's decision to withdraw the MAX 7 application.

"I thanked him for making what I know is probably a tough decision for the shareholders and but also the right decision for the people who will be flying as passengers on the aircraft," Duckworth said. (Reuters)



▲Bank of America Chairman and CEO Brian Thomas Moynihan speaks during the U.S. Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee oversight hearing on Wall Street firms, on Capitol Hill in Washington, U.S.

Bank of America CEO Moynihan's pay falls to \$29 million in 2023

NEW YORK — Bank of America cut compensation for CEO Brian Moynihan by 3.3 per cent to \$29 million for 2023 after its annual profit fell 4 per cent, the lender said in a filing on Friday.

That compares with Moynihan's pay of \$30 million for 2022.

By contrast, rival JPMorgan Chase gave CEO Jamie Dimon a 4 per cent pay increase to \$36 million for 2023, while Morgan Stanley awarded Executive Chairman James Gorman a 17 per cent bump to \$37 million in his last

year as CEO.

Bank of America's board cited Moynihan's leadership and the company's success during "a period of considerable economic uncertainty" as factors behind its decision.

The third-largest U.S. lender's profit shrank in the fourth quarter, hurt by \$3.7 billion in one-off charges and a slide in interest income as it paid more to hold on to customer deposits.

Still, its executives expressed optimism about the U.S. economic outlook, citing resiliency among consumers. (Reuters)

Monks draft in perfumier to crack Bible code that reveals recipe for ancient perfume

IT sounds like the perfect mash-up plot for a blockbuster novel: The Da Vinci Code – about the discovery of a code revealing a religious secret – meets Perfume – involving the quest to find the ultimate scent.

But the tale of Dominican friars, a perfumer and a Jewish rabbi finding the formula for a perfume hidden in the Bible’s Song of Songs goes one better – this is no fiction and the scent will be on sale from March.

The ancient Song of Songs has long intrigued historians and biblical scholars, with its erotic content being unlike any other book in the Bible. Verses from it, mentioning “your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate” and “let my beloved come to the garden...and eat its choicest fruits” have been used as marriage service readings, while some experts think the text was performed as part of fertility rituals when it was written around 3,000 years ago.

While it is full of references to plants and flowers, until now nobody had worked out the Song of Songs – sometimes called the Song of Solomon – might hold a secret message about perfume. But after cracking its code, perfumer Alexandre Helwani has produced a perfume with fruity top notes from pomegranate, mandrake, apple and figs, and floral notes from lily and wine flowers – all brought together to evoke love.

The search for the formula began when the Dominican friars who run the prestigious



▲Although other perfumers have created perfumes inspired by the Song of Songs, this one ‘is the perfume encoded 3,000 years ago and nobody has rediscovered it before’.

French Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem embarked on a new translation of the Bible. Keen to highlight cultural and artistic themes in the Bible, friar Olivier Vernard brought in perfumer Alexandre Helwani to help them study its plants and their uses. Helwani was recommended to Vernard because he had helped devise a perfume based on plants in Homer’s Odyssey, and Vernard thought he could do something similar for the Bible. It was then

that Helwani turned his attention to the Song of Songs.

“As I read it, I instinctively knew that there was something there, that the authors knew what they were doing”, he said. Helwani then turned to a rabbi, Marc-Alain Ouaknin who had also been studying the Song of Songs and together they looked at it using gematria, a form of Jewish numerology. In this system, Hebrew letters correspond to numbers, and a decoder can find a message

through it. Using it, the pair revealed which plants should be used in the perfume and in what amount. “As we studied the text we realised we were being told what to use and in what proportions”, said Helwani.

Helwani spent a year studying the text and in the lab working on the formula. As well as the fruits and flowers, the Song of Songs code included nard, myrrh and balsam, to create a balanced scent.

The question that Helwani and Ouaknin are trying to answer is why the unknown writers of the Song of Songs would have written the perfume formula in code. “It is a mystical text and I think the formula might have been used in a cultic way, and that this is linked to a divination ritual”, said Helwani. “But we need to find out a lot more to be sure”.

Although other perfumers have created perfumes inspired by the Song of Songs, this one, said Helwani, “is the perfume encoded 3,000 years ago and nobody has rediscovered it before”.

While the perfume, marketed by Iconofly, goes on sale online and in selected stores in March, the Dominican friars have their sights on something else. “We think we might also develop an elixir”, said Fr Vernard. “The Song of Songs is about all the senses, including smell and taste. We want to open up the Bible for readers to fully experience it”.

(The Telegraph)



▲Blood-powered batteries are here.

Batteries that run on blood now a thing

IN another unusual creation, we now have functional blood batteries.

Scientists at the University of Córdoba found a way to incorporate haemoglobin – the most important bit in red blood cells – into a battery that runs between 20-30 days.

They published their findings in the journal Energy & Fuels.

The researchers based their creation on zinc-air batteries, as opposed to their more famous lithium-ion cousins. These batteries are powered by a chemical reaction where oxygen becomes water at the positive end of the battery, which releases electrodes that oxidize zinc at the negative end.

But to get a continuous reaction from the batteries, you need something to keep powering the chemical reaction.

This is where the haemoglobin comes in, the protein that carries oxygen around the body and gives blood its red colour.

‘To be a good catalyst, it has to have two properties,’ said senior author Manuel Cano Luna. ‘It needs to quickly absorb oxygen

molecules, and form water molecules relatively easily.’

‘And haemoglobin met those requirements.’

In an impressive feat, haemoglobin turned out to be just the catalyst required, as just 0.165 milligrams of haemoglobin kept it alive for 20-30 days.

But don’t worry, this isn’t going to be like gold during the end times when we’re scrambling for a phone charge, but could prove revolutionary for medical equipment planted inside the body, such as pacemakers.

However, there is still some way to go. The batteries are not currently rechargeable (blood banks, anyone?), so the team is searching for something that can convert the spent material back into air.

They also won’t work in space where, of course, there’s no oxygen.

But given the drive to become more sustainable has come up with some creative ideas, we never know what the future holds.

(The Telegraph)

First functional human brain tissue produced through 3D printing

THE first functional 3D-printed brain tissue has been developed to examine the human brain’s function and study various neurological disorders.

According to experts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, printed tissue can “grow and function like typical brain tissue.” This 3D-printed brain model might be useful in studying various neurological and neurodevelopmental problems, including Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease.

“This could be a hugely powerful model to help us understand how brain cells and parts of the brain communicate in humans,” said Su-Chun Zhang, professor of neuroscience

and neurology at UW-Madison’s Waisman Center.

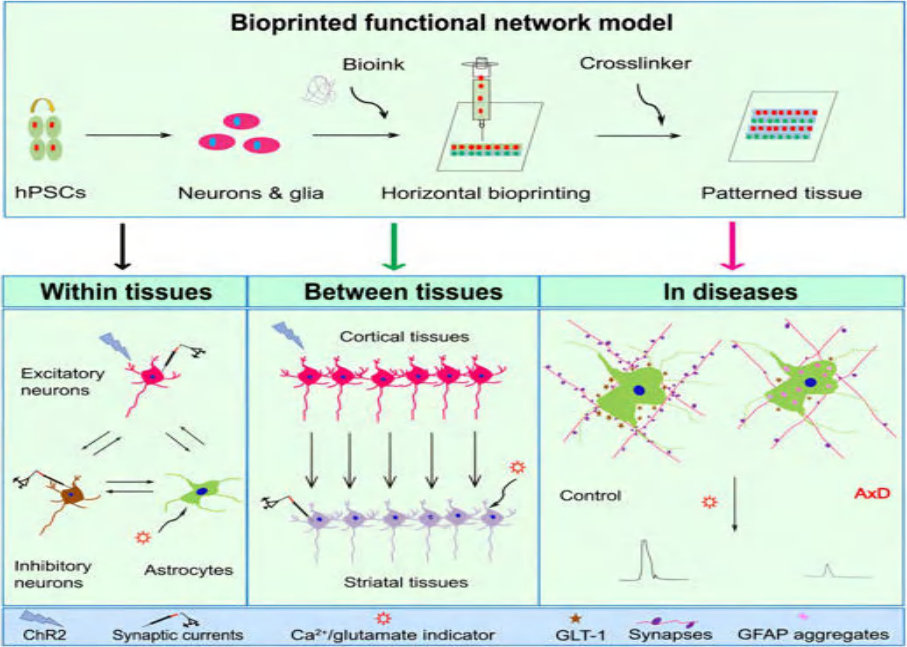
“It could change the way we look at stem cell biology, neuroscience, and the pathogenesis of many neurological and psychiatric disorders,” added Zhang in the release.

Use of horizontal 3D printing approach

Instead of using the conventional vertical layer stacking method, the researchers followed an innovative horizontal 3D printing approach in this development.

Neurons produced from induced pluripotent stem cells were carefully put in layers utilizing a softer bio-ink gel, creating a more favorable environment for growth.

(MSN)



▲Functional network model. Cell Stem Cell.

Opposition divided after Senegal's President Macky Sall postponed elections

THE decision to postpone the Presidential elections in Senegal was well received by the former ruling Democratic Party whose presidential candidate is Karim Wade. Wade's supporters were seen celebrating the postponement of the February 25 presidential election by President Macky Sall.

The decision follows, among other things, the dispute between their candidate and the Constitutional Council, accused of corruption by the former ruling party.

"We magnify this decision because it is a decision that renders justice. We magnify this decision by the President of the Republic to postpone the elections, because we could not organize these elections without brother Abdou Karim Meïssa Wade, who is the only viable, reliable alternative for the emergence of this country," said Franck Daddy Diatta, a youth leader of Jeunesse Libérale.

Several opposition figures rejected President Macky Sall's decision to postpone the election, with at least two of the 20 presidential candidates saying they would proceed with their campaign scheduled to kick off on Sunday.

Sall's tenure is scheduled to end on April 2. Senegal's electoral code requires 80 days' notice of an election, meaning the earliest a new vote could take place is the last week of April.

"I am launching my electoral campaign tomorrow, in Dakar, with the candidates who have chosen to defend the Constitution," former minister and opposition candidate Thierno Alassane Sall said Saturday in a post on social media platform X.

Former mayor of the capital of Dakar Khalifa Sall also asked the citizens to "come together to save our democracy" while an-



▲ THE decision to postpone the Presidential elections in Senegal was well received by the former ruling Democratic Party whose presidential candidate is Karim Wade

other opposition candidate, Déthié Fall, said, "We will start our campaign and we call on all candidates to do the same."

There were no signs of unrest in Dakar on Sunday.

The U.S. Department of State noted Senegal's "strong tradition of democracy and peaceful transitions of power" in a post on X, which urged "all participants in (the) electoral process to engage peacefully to swiftly set a new date and the conditions for a timely, free and fair election."

In postponing the election, Sall cited a dispute between the judiciary and federal lawmakers over the disqualification process and the reported dual nationality of some qualified candidates.

His announcement followed a request to postpone the vote made by the opposition

Senegalese Democratic Party, whose candidate Karim Wade was among those disqualified.

Wade had accused two judges of corruption in the disqualification process and said that postponing the vote would "make it possible to repair the damage suffered" by those disqualified.

West Africa's regional bloc on Sunday called for dialogue to resolve the political crisis.

Senegalese politicians must "prioritize dialogue and collaboration for transparent, inclusive and credible elections," the regional bloc known as ECOWAS said in a statement that called on authorities to "expedite the various processes to set a new date for the elections" after Saturday's postponement.

(Reuters)



▲ Namibia's President Hage Geingob, 82, died in hospital early on Sunday,

Namibia's President Hage Geingob, 82, dies

JOHANNESBURG - Namibia's President Hage Geingob, 82, died in hospital early on Sunday, the presidency said, weeks after he was diagnosed with cancer.

Geingob had been in charge of the thinly populated and mostly arid southern African country since 2015, the year he announced he had survived prostate cancer.

Vice President Nangolo Mbumba takes the helm in Namibia - a mining hotspot with significant deposits of diamonds and the electric car battery ingredient lithium - until presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of the year.

A presidency post on social media platform X did not give a cause of death, but late last month the presidency said he had travelled to the United States for "a two-day novel treatment for cancerous cells", after being diagnosed following a regular medical check-up. Born in 1941, Geingob was a prominent politician since before Namibia achieved independence from white minority-ruled South Africa in 1990. He chaired the body that drafted Namibia's constitution, then became its first prime minister at independence on March 21 of that year, a position he retained until 2002.

'CHAINS OF INJUSTICE'

In 2007, Geingob became vice president of the governing South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), which he had joined as an agitator for independence when Namibia was still known as South West Africa.

SWAPO has remained in power in Namibia unchallenged since independence. The former German colony is technically an upper middle-income country but one with huge disparities in wealth.

"There were no textbooks to prepare us for accomplishing the task of development and shared prosperity after independence," he said in a speech to mark the day in 2018. "We needed to build a Namibia in which the chains of the injustices of the past would be broken."

Geingob served as trade and industry minister before becoming prime minister again in 2012.

He won the 2014 election with 87% of the vote but only narrowly avoided a runoff with a little more than half the votes in a subsequent poll in November 2019.

(Reuters)

DR Congo youth group says seven activists abducted by suspected security agents

KINSHASA - Suspected agents of the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) abducted seven youth activists at a peaceful rally in Democratic Republic of Congo on Saturday, a youth group said.

The LUCHA group said the activists, who included four members of the group, were bundled into a white Jeep by plain clothes agents and taken to an undisclosed location. The incident happened during a rally in the capital Kinshasa to draw attention to the security crisis in the east of the country, LUCHA said.

Democratic Republic of Congo's presidency, which oversees the ANR, told Reuters to seek comment from the ANR. The ANR did not respond.

"LUCHA is particularly concerned about the safety and physical well-being of its comrades," the group said in a statement on Sunday, calling on the authorities to immediately release those being held.

"Instead of carrying out abductions of innocent citizens in Kinshasa, security servic-



▲ - Suspected agents of the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) abducted seven youth activists at a peaceful rally in Democratic Republic of Congo on Saturday, a youth group said.

es could make themselves useful in eastern Congo where armed groups, including the M23, are active."

A government source told Reuters the detained activists would be questioned on Sunday, but said it was not clear why they were being held. "For the moment we do not know what they are accused of," the source said.

Saturday's rally was organised to mark the 600 days that the strategic eastern border town of Bunagana has been occupied by Tutsi-led M23 rebels, whose renewed offensives since 2022 have forced tens of thousands to flee and worsened the region's decades-long security and humanitarian crisis.

(Reuters)

US, Britain wage strikes against Iran-linked Houthis in Yemen

WASHINGTON - The United States and Britain launched strikes against 36 Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday, in the second day of major U.S. operations against Iran-linked groups following a deadly attack on American troops last weekend.

The strikes hit buried weapons storage facilities, missile systems, launchers and other capabilities the Houthis have used to attack Red Sea shipping, the Pentagon said, adding it targeted 13 locations across the country.

It was the latest sign of spreading conflict in the Middle East since war erupted between Israel and Hamas after the militant Palestinian group's deadly assault on Israel on Oct. 7.

"This collective action sends a clear message to the Houthis that they will continue to bear further consequences if they do not end their illegal attacks on international shipping and naval vessels," U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said the U.S. strikes "will not pass without a response and consequences."

The Yemen strikes are running parallel to an unfolding U.S. campaign of military retaliation over the killing of three American soldiers in a drone strike by Iran-backed militants on an outpost in Jordan.

On Friday, the U.S. carried out the first wave of that retaliation, striking in Iraq and Syria against more than 85 targets linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and militias it backs, reportedly kill-



▲ The United States and Britain launched strikes against 36 Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday, in the second day of major U.S. operations against Iran-linked groups following a deadly attack on American troops last weekend.

ing nearly 40 people. The U.S. has carried out more than a dozen strikes against Houthi targets in the past several weeks, but these have failed to stop attacks by the group.

Sarea, the Houthi military spokesperson, suggested in a statement on social media that the group's intervention in the Red Sea would continue.

"These attacks will not deter us from our ethical, religious and humanitarian stance in support of the resilient Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip," Sarea said.

Just hours before the latest major wave of strikes from the sea and air, the U.S. military's Central Command issued statements detailing other, more limited strikes in the past day that included hitting six cruise missiles the Houthis were preparing to launch against ships in the Red Sea.

Around 4 a.m. in Yemen (0100 GMT), the U.S. military also struck a Houthi anti-ship cruise missile that was poised to launch.

"This is not an escalation," said British Defence Minister Grant Shapps. "We have already successfully targeted launchers and

storage sites involved in Houthi attacks, and I am confident that our latest strikes have further degraded the Houthis' capabilities."

The United States said Sunday's strikes had support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and New Zealand. U.S. Central Command said that beyond missile capabilities, the strikes targeted drone storage and operations sites, radars and helicopters.

Linked Groups

Despite the strikes against Iran-linked groups, the Pentagon has said it does not want war with Iran and does not believe Tehran wants war either. U.S. Republicans have been ratcheting up pressure on President Joe Biden, a Democrat, to deal a blow to Iran directly.

It was unclear how Tehran would respond to the strikes, which do not directly target Iran but degrade groups it backs.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said in a statement the attacks in Iraq and Syria represented "another adventurous and strategic mistake by the United States that will result only in increased tension and instability".

Iraq summoned the U.S. charge d'affaires in Baghdad to deliver a formal protest after strikes in that country.

The Houthi military said in its statement that the United States and Britain carried out a total of 48 airstrikes on Yemen, with 13 of them in the capital Sanaa and Sanaa Governorate. Another 11 strikes were on Taiz Governorate and nine were on Hodeidah Governorate.

(Reuters)

Northern Ireland appoints Irish nationalist as First Minister in historic shift

BELFAST - Northern Ireland's parliament appointed an Irish nationalist as First Minister for the first time on Saturday, a historic milestone in a state established a century ago to ensure the dominance of pro-British unionists.

Michelle O'Neill's appointment, the delayed result of a watershed 2022 election, is the latest sign of the rise in the British region of a Sinn Fein party that has said its ultimate dream of a united Ireland is "within touching distance".

The appointment came as Sinn Fein's pro-British rival, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), formally ended a two-year boycott of power-sharing government after striking a deal with the British government to ease post-Brexit trade frictions.

"This is an historic day which represents a new dawn," O'Neill, 47, told the assembly. "I will serve everyone equally and be a First Minister for all.

"I am sorry for all the lives lost during the conflict without exception," O'Neill added.

Britain's minister for the region, Chris Heaton-Harris, said the restoration of government represented a "great day for Northern Ireland". U.S. President Joe Biden, who visit-

ed Belfast last year to urge a return to the power-sharing agreement, on Saturday called the restoration "an important step".

O'Neill represents a shift to a new generation of Sinn Fein politicians not directly involved in the region's decades-long bloody conflict between Irish nationalists seeking a united Ireland and pro-British unionists wanting to remain the United Kingdom.

As the former political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Sinn Fein was long shunned by the political establishment on both sides of the border. It is now also the most popular party in the Irish Republic.

The post of deputy First Minister, which has equal power but less symbolic weight, was taken by the DUP's Emma Little-Pengelly.

OPPOSITION

There was heavy security around the assembly building, but no sign of trouble.

Opposition to O'Neill's appointment was led by the Traditional Unionist Voice party, which has also rejected the DUP's trade deal.

"We have a Sinn Fein First Minister, but not in my name, nor in the name of thousands of unionists who will never bow the knee to IRA Sinn Fein," TUV's single deputy Jim Allister said.



▲ Michelle O'Neil Northern Ireland's First Minister.

While Sinn Fein has this week talked up the prospect of unity, all politicians in Northern Ireland are under intense pressure to deliver on bread-and-butter issues after the two-year hiatus piled pressure on already stretched public services.

A referendum on unity is at the discretion of the British government and opinion polls consistently show a clear majority in favour of remaining part of the United Kingdom.

(Reuters)

Pope condemns anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism

VATICAN CITY - Pope Francis condemned all forms of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, labelling them as a "sin against God", after noticing an increase in attacks against Jews around the world.

"(The Church) rejects every form of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, unequivocally condemning manifestations of hatred towards Jews and Judaism as a sin against God," the pontiff wrote in a letter to the Jewish population of Israel dated Feb. 2 and made public on Saturday.

"Together with you, we, Catholics, are very concerned about the terrible increase in attacks against Jews around the world. We had hoped that 'never again' would be a refrain heard by the new generations," he added.

The Pope noted that wars and divisions are increasing all over the world "in a sort of piecemeal world war", hitting the lives of many populations.

Francis, 87, has condemned Hamas' Oct. 7 cross-border

attack from Gaza into southern Israel. He has also said on several occasions that a two-state solution was needed to put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In his letter, the pope also called, once again, for the release of those hostages still being held by militants.

He said his heart was torn at the sight of the conflict in the Holy Land and the division and hatred stemming from it, adding that the world was looking at the unfolding of events in the area with "apprehension and pain".

He assured the Jewish community of his closeness and affection, "particularly (those) consumed by anguish, pain, fear and even anger", repeating his call for the end of the war.

Francis said he prayed for peace. "My heart is close to you, to the Holy Land, to all the peoples who inhabit it, Israelis and Palestinians, and I pray that the desire for peace may prevail in all".

(Reuters)



Eswatini creatives rewarded for their hard work

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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IN the life of a hardworking individual, there comes a time of harvest.

A special moment where all his or her sweat, sleepless nights, and blisters finally pay off.

That was the story at the Eswatini Creators Awards where local creatives were rewarded for their hard work and brand positioning. The atmosphere was electric as hopeful contestants flocked to the Sharma House on Saturday evening, to know their fate, and results in each category. Some returned home all smiles after winning the awards, and some went home empty-handed, but with full appreciation of their fans, for their support, despite defeat.

The Eswatini Creators Awards aimed to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication of local creatives who have been tirelessly working to establish their brands and make a mark in the industry. The awards ceremony was a testament to the thriving creative scene in Eswatini, with artists from various disciplines being honored for their exceptional contributions. One of the highlights of the evening was the performance by Young Zesh, who was awarded the Artist of the Year award. The performance of his hit song 'KaKhoza,' left the audience in awe, as he effortlessly commanded the stage with his infectious energy and undeniable talent. Collaborating with Lyrikal Busta, the duo delivered a memorable performance that had the crowd on their feet, singing along to every word.

... Smallz, Uncle Waffles, Bingo recognised

IN this year's Eswatini Creators Awards, the late comedian Smallz, Eswatini-born global DJ sensation Uncle Waffles, and entertainment guru, Mbongeni 'Bingo' Mbingo have been recognized for their contribution to the local entertainment scene.

The Eswatini Creators Awards ceremony was a night filled with recognition and celebration of the immense talent that exists within the local entertainment scene.

Uncle Waffles, renowned as one of the most sought-after DJs in the world, was honored for her exceptional contribution to the music industry. Her mother received the award on her behalf, acknowledging her daughter's global acclaim and achievements. Uncle Waffles has not only graced stages alongside Africa's top talents but has also become a cultural ambassador for African dance music. Her groundbreaking performance at Coachella, where she became the first-ever Amapiano act, solidified her status as an international



▲ Swazi Kween was one of the winners at the Eswatini Creators Awards (Best TikToker).

Not to be outdone, poet Beezae took to the stage and mesmerized the audience with her thought-provoking poetry. Her well-curated set left a lasting impression on everyone present, showcasing the power of words and the ability to evoke emotions through art.

The Eswatini Creators Awards not only recognized individual talents but also served as a platform for up-and-coming creatives. The awards ceremony was a night of celebration, inspiration, and unity, as artists and fans came together to appreciate the incredible talent that Eswatini has to offer.

sensation.

The late Smallz the Comedian was posthumously recognized for his comedic prowess and the indelible impact he made on the entertainment scene. His award was received by his mother and family, including his son, in a heartfelt moment of remembrance. Smallz was known for his unique brand of humor, which touched the lives of countless fans and fellow entertainers. His infectious laughter and charm made him an inspiration to many, and his instrumental role in discovering and nurturing local talent, such as Gogo, further solidified his legacy.

Mbongeni 'Bingo' Mbingo, a veteran in the entertainment industry with over 30 years of experience, was also honored for his significant contributions. Bingo has played a pivotal role in the growth of the local entertainment industry and has been instrumental in helping many brands thrive. His expertise and guidance have been invaluable to aspiring artists and entrepreneurs alike, making him a true icon in the industry.



▲ Smallz was posthumously honoured at the Eswatini Creators Awards.



▲ Uncle Waffles was also recognised at the awards.

FULL LIST OF WINNERS

- ▶ **DJ of The Year** - It's All Blaq
- ▶ **Poet of The Year** - Amandla the Poet
- ▶ **Artist of The Year** - Young Zesh
- ▶ **Producer of The Year** - Slotta
- ▶ **Make-up Artist of The Year** - Candice Mdluli
- ▶ **Influencer of The Year** - Illa Penboy
- ▶ **Best Curated Event of The Year** - Makoti Festival
- ▶ **Photographer of The Year** - Deelangza Photography
- ▶ **Best Comedian of The Year** - Gogo & S'lwane
- ▶ **Best YouTuber of The Year** - Tebelehlhe Nxumalo
- ▶ **MC of The Year** - Thamie Pastor Bae Ndlovu
- ▶ **Best Visual Artist of The Year** - Lwazi Tsela
- ▶ **Best Graphic Designer of The Year** - Sandile Simelane
- ▶ **Fashion Designer of The Year** - Sandziso Bibi Dlamini
- ▶ **Best TikToker of The Year** - Swazi Kween
- ▶ **Best Streetculture Wear of The Year** - Teddz Urban
- ▶ **Videographer of The Year** - Eja'dini Studios
- ▶ **Nailtech of The Year** - Tapeel Tsabedze
- ▶ **Best Deco of The Year** - House of Wedding and Decor
- ▶ **Software/ IT Designer of The Year** - Mlondie M
- ▶ **CEO's Award** - Uncle Waffles and Mbongeni 'Bingo' Mbingo
- ▶ **Special Award** - Smallz the Comedian

Gogo & S'lwane honour the late Smallz

IN a heartfelt gesture of respect and admiration, Eswatini's beloved comedy duo, Gogo and S'lwane, made a selfless decision at the recent awards ceremony.

They graciously gave away their prestigious "Best Comedian Award" to the late Smallz the Comedian, honouring his immense influence on the entertainment industry and the profound impact he had on their lives.

Gogo and S'lwane had the privilege of working closely with Smallz during their time together as The Merchants of Bottomless Laughter. The trio formed a dynamic team, revolutionising the local comedy scene and bringing joy to audiences far and wide.

Interview

In an interview, Gogo shared how they had great plans for 2024, and had a wish to work with the fallen hero. However, tragedy struck when Smallz tragically lost his life in a devastating car accident. Gogo expressed the profound loss they felt, as they had looked forward to creating more laughter and unforgettable moments together.

Gogo emphasised the tremendous influence Smallz had on the comedy industry, noting that his talent and business-minded approach elevated the game to new heights. Smallz's impact extended beyond the stage, inspiring fellow comedians and earning the respect of business professionals within the industry.

Reflecting on the significance of the awards, Gogo expressed appreciation for the initiative, recognising its role in celebrating and uplifting creatives in Eswatini. He called upon companies to support the awards and contribute to the stability and growth of the entertainment scene. Additionally, Gogo appealed to the government for financial support, emphasising that increased investment would enhance the awards' impact and provide even sweeter incentives for deserving winners.

Julius Malema praises Zee Nxumalo's mesmerising voice

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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SOUTH African politician, Julius Malema has taken to social media to express admiration for Eswatini-born musician Zee Nxumalo's voice.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader, known for his charismatic and fiery persona, couldn't help but acknowledge the vocal prowess of the talented artist. Malema's social media post, accompanied by a screenshot of Zee Nxumalo's hit song 'Funk 55,' read, "There's just something about her voice." The song, a collaboration with DBN Gogo, has taken the airwaves by storm, capturing the hearts of music lovers across the nation.

Julius Malema is a South African politician who is the founder and leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a populist far-left political party known for the red berets and military-style outfits worn by its members.

Zandile Nxumalo, affectionately known as Zee Nxumalo, is a rising star in the South African music industry. Born in Eswatini, she has embraced Johannesburg as her second home, earning the endearing nickname of a 'Jozi baby.' Zee's vibrant personality, combined with her exceptional musical abilities, has endeared her to fans and critics alike.



▲ Zandile Nxumalo.

Recently, Zee Nxumalo joined forces with Punchline Media, an esteemed independent record label, to embark on her solo career. This partnership has provided her with a platform to showcase her immense talent and catapult her into the spotlight. Drawing inspiration from iconic artists such as Kelly Khumalo, The Soil, and the late Brenda Fassie, Zee has crafted a unique musical identity for herself.



▲ Julius Malema.

In 2022, Zee released a captivating six-track project titled 'KwaNxumalo.' This project follows the success of her single 'Hamba' in May, which received widespread acclaim. Produced by the talented Profound, who recently collaborated with Khuli Chana on his latest single 'Take Care,' 'KwaNxumalo' offered listeners a glimpse into the multifaceted themes that shape Zee Nxumalo's life.

Bholoja joins the Makoti Festival line-up

THE Makoti Festival has just added another star to its already dazzling line-up, with local musician, Bholoja, set to grace the stage.

This highly anticipated event, now in its third edition, promises to be an unforgettable celebration of Eswatini culture and a tribute to modern women. Joining the ranks of renowned artists such as Gospel star Ntokozo Mbambo and Maskandi superstar Mathandeni SK, Bholoja's inclusion in the festival's line-up is sure to captivate audiences. Known for his soulful melodies and powerful lyrics, Bholoja has become one of the most relevant figures in the contemporary African music scene.

Born Mbongiseni Ngubane, Bholoja gained widespread recognition with the release of his debut album, "Swazi Soul," in 2009. This groundbreaking album not only earned him international exposure but also made him the first Swati artist to achieve such acclaim solely through his music. Drawing inspiration from Swati tradition, Bholoja's music serves as a powerful vehicle for preserving Eswatini's cultural heritage.

Beyond the music, the Makoti Festival offers a vibrant celebration of fashion and food. With an array of stalls showcasing traditional and contemporary attire, the festival embraces the diversity and beauty of women from all backgrounds. From intricate beadwork to modern fashion



▲ Bholoja.

trends, attendees can immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of Eswatini's fashion scene.

In addition to fashion, the festival also provides a platform for local entrepreneurs to showcase their culinary skills. Food stalls will offer a delectable range of dishes, from traditional Swazi cuisine to international flavours, ensuring that attendees can indulge in a gastronomic adventure.

The Makoti Festival, taking place on April 27, 2024, at the Malkerns Country Club, aims to celebrate and empower women, whether married or unmarried, and inspire young girls to embrace their future roles

as proud makotis. Early bird tickets are now available for purchase at E250 and can be found at Howler, Computickets, and Galitos outlets.

For Bholoja, his music is not just a form of artistic expression, but a response to the changing global landscape and the challenges faced by Africa. Through his songs, he becomes a mouthpiece for the underprivileged, bringing a message of hope to those affected by social and health pandemics. His passion for maintaining Swati traditions and preserving Eswatini's cultural heritage shines through in every note he sings.



▲ Trend twins.

Trend Twins to host Dance Classes

ESWATINI'S dynamic duo, the Trend Twins, are set to take the dance scene by storm once again as they gear up to host their dance classes.

This exciting opportunity will be held at Fitness Zone in Ezulwini, where dancers of all ages are invited to join in on the fun. From the young age of 4 and upwards, aspiring dancers can now learn from the best in the business. The Trend Twins have carefully crafted their dance classes to cater to dancers of all skill levels, ensuring that everyone can find their groove. Whether you're a beginner looking to explore the world of dance or an experienced dancer wanting to refine your technique, these classes are the perfect platform to let your creativity soar.

Movement

The dance classes will be held every Thursday from 2 pm to 4 pm, providing dancers with the perfect mid-week escape to express themselves through movement. For those unable to attend during the week, the Trend Twins have also scheduled Saturday classes from 11 am to 2 pm, ensuring that everyone has a chance to participate.

To make this opportunity accessible to all, the Trend Twins have introduced flexible subscription options. For those looking to fully immerse themselves in the world of dance, a monthly subscription is available for E300. However, if you're simply looking to drop in for a day of dancing, a daily subscription can be purchased for E60. This way, dancers can choose the option that best suits their needs and availability.

The Trend Twins, Nkosenhle Dlamini, and Nosimilo Dlamini, aged 25 and 29 respectively, have quickly become household names in the Afro House scene. What started as a dance group has blossomed into a formidable DJ duo, captivating audiences with their infectious beats and electrifying performances. Drawing inspiration from industry heavyweights such as Shimza, Cairo, and Da Capo, the Trend Twins have carved their unique style, blending Afro House, Gqom Music, and Dance into an irresistible fusion. Since joining forces in 2016, the Trend Twins have consistently risen to the top, leaving a trail of awe-inspiring performances in their wake. Their passion for dance and music is evident in every move they make, and now they are ready to share their knowledge and expertise with aspiring dancers in Eswatini.

Busta 929, Boohle sue Black Brain Pictures over copyright breach

BUSTA 929 and Boohle, two amapiano sensations, are locked in a legal battle with Black Brain Pictures over the unauthorized use of their hit song Ngixolele.

Sunday World can exclusively reveal that Black Brain Pictures, owned by Mandla Ngcongwane, known as Mandla N, is the target of an R11-million copyright infringement demand from the duo's record label, Mokima Music.

The copyright to the club banger belongs to Mokima Music, according to court documents submitted to the Johannesburg High Court.

This came about after it inked contracts with Busta 929, whose real name is Thapelo Theo Ndou, and Boohle, born Hlengiwe Buhlebevangelini Ntando Manyathi.

According to the record label, the song was initially released in South Africa on October 29 2021, or thereabouts.

On May 5 2021, Mokima Music and Manyathi entered into a written composer administration agreement for a period of three years with the option of renewal, according to Nokuthula Mvelase, who is representing the company.

Manyathi committed to writing music only for the label, to give Mokima Music all copyrights to the song, and to refrain from granting any rights, under the terms of this agreement, to any other party.

Furthermore, the songbird gave the stable the sole authority to disseminate, perform, and copy her works in public.

Additionally, according to Mokima Music, Manyathi granted it permission to receive all royalties, fees and money obtained from the use of her compositions.

The stable is also entitled to demand that all actions and other legal proceedings pertaining to her compositions be started, continued, settled, abandoned, or defended.

The stable said that on May 1 2021, it signed a written composer administration agreement with Ndou in Johannesburg for a period of five years.

The agreement would automatically be extended for successive terms of one year unless either party terminated it with 60 days' written notice before the end of the current term.

Mvelase represented the stable in this transaction.

Mokima Music was granted full permission by Ndou to manage his composition. In accordance with this agreement, he further promised not to transfer the rights to any other individual.

On May 6 2021, Mokima Music, through Mvelase, signed a three-year publishing administration contract in Johannesburg with Thupa Industry, a private company with Ndou as its only director. Thupa gave the stable full administration rights over all of its compositions, including copyrights.



▲ Busta 929 and Boohle, two amapiano sensations, are locked in a legal battle with Black Brain Pictures over the unauthorized use of their hit song Ngixolele.



Mokima Music claimed that Black Brain Pictures, the creator of The Black Door, which is screened on e.tv, had violated the stable's copyright. This occurred when the business purposefully used the song without Mokima Music's permission.

"Had the plaintiff been approached by the defendant to license the song for synchronised use as the titular theme of the series, the plaintiff would have licensed the song,

[including both the musical work and literary work] for a fee of R40 000 per episode," read the court papers.

"This would have amounted to a total fee of R11 000 000, being R40 000 multiplied by the 275 episodes. "Accordingly, the plaintiff has suffered damages in the amount of R11 000 000 as a result of the defendant's infringement of the copyright in the song." (Sunday world)

Police seize hijacked BMW driven by Londie London

POLICE have confiscated a hijacked BMW 330i believed to have been driven by reality TV star and singer Londiwe Zulu, popularly known as Londie London.

The car, which is similar to the one the boastful Zulu flaunted on social media in March last year, was allegedly hijacked in KwaZulu-Natal and handed over to her by her ex-boyfriend, Sphamandla Mabonga.

Zulu bragged to her followers that Mabonga had bought her a brand new BMW 330i, shortly after telling those who cared to listen that her other ex-fiancé had taken back the car he had given her.

Little did she know the luxury vehicle would later be impounded by the police on suspicion that it was hijacked in KZN.

News that the cops impounded the vehicle was revealed by a source close to the police,

who are investigating Mabonga after a shooting that occurred at Tempo Luxury Restaurant in Rivonia, Sandton, last month.

According to a source who cannot be named for fear of victimisation, police discovered that the car was not registered in Zulu or Mabonga's names.

Upon conducting further investigations, they discovered the vehicle was hijacked and belonged to a security company in Es- howe, KwaZulu-Natal.

"The company opened a case in KwaZulu-Natal for the hijacked car," said the source.

The informant also said

police confiscated several firearms from Mabonga to establish whether they were licensed.

"They are also still looking for a red Bentley and a BMW i8."

The mole also said eight bodyguards who were with Mabonga on the night of the shooting are still at large, and police are on their trail. "The bodyguards are wanted for the same charges that Mabonga faces, which are two counts of attempted murder, one count of assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, possession of an unlicensed firearm, pointing of a firearm, and firing a firearm in a municipal area," said the deep throat.

Mabonga was due to appear in the Randburg magistrates's court on Monday, but was unable to do so as he was still in hospital under police guard.

Gauteng police spokesperson Colonel Dimakatso Nevhuhulwi said Mabonga, who is recovering at a Johannesburg public hospital, is expected to appear in court on Monday, February 5.

A mole also revealed staff who were working the night shift when the shooting happened were traumatized and are receiving counseling.

Since the night of the shooting on January 19, 2024, the establishment has now beefed up its security to ensure the safety of customers.

Zulu declined to comment and said she broke up with Mabonga a long time ago. (Sunday world)

Bathu celebrates Kwaito icon Spikiri with new sneaker

THE South African footwear brand Bathu has joined forces with the renowned kwaito icon, Mandla "Spikiri" Mofokeng, after launching their latest sneaker range, Ndofoya.

The leading local footwear brand is on quite the roll, less than a year after its latest release has announced the launch of its latest sneaker range which pays homage to the spirit of the Meadowlands community and celebrates resilience, strength, and all the success rooted in the heart of Ndofoya.

Bathu has joined forces with the musical icon, Spikiri, who is also known as The King Don Father.

The collaboration seeks to also celebrate him, his authenticity, his musical journey and staying true to who he, is as well as his work and his contributions to South African culture.

The brand hosted an intimate dinner in Houghton, honouring Kwaito legends for all their contributions as the pio-

neers of Kwaito in the 90s and early 2000. Hosted by actress and singer Nandi Madida, the night honoured the greats such as DJ Christos, Boom Shaka, Trompies, Zola 7, KB Motsilanyane, Tamara Dey, Bongo Maffin, 999 and Spikiri.

The dinner was attended by the likes of Lasizwe, Thembi Seete, Stoan from Bongo Maffin, content creators and media.

Inspired by the rich cultural heritage and vibrant community life of Ndofoya, Bathu's Ndofoya collection encapsulates the essence of Meadowlands in each carefully crafted pair of shoes.

The design incorporates elements that reflect the dynamic spirit and unwavering determination of the people of Ndofoya.

"Bathu is a South African brand that celebrates our stories of those who have had a huge influence in our style, and fashion through their music. (IOL)



▲ Londiwe Zulu, popularly known as Londie London.

BLACK people in the United States are more likely to develop certain conditions or have worse outcomes from those conditions.

Several conditions impact Black communities more strongly than other racial groups. Some of these conditions are more common among Black people.

In others, Black people may have worse outcomes or develop conditions earlier.

The reasons for these disparities are complex and often intertwined. In this article, we'll review conditions that disproportionately affect Black people in the United States and the reasons behind the disparities. We'll also address what Black people can do to close the health gap for these conditions.

CAUSES OF RACIAL DISPARITIES IN HEALTH

Before we delve into the conditions, it's important to understand why some of these disparities exist. In some cases, it can be a matter of biology and genetics. But in most cases, the disparities are rooted in several systemic issues.

Known as social determinants of health (SDOHs), these nonmedical factors can influence health outcomes. Experts group SDOHs into five categories:

Economic stability: Lack of income or employment can be a significant barrier to stable housing, as well as access to medical care and nutritious foods.

Education access and quality: Not only is your level of education often tied to your income, but education can play a role in helping you live a longer and healthier life.

Healthcare access and quality: Black people in the United States are more likely to be uninsured or underinsured than their white counterparts. They also report receiving a lower standard of care.

Neighborhood and environment: Living in an area with high rates of violence or pollution can significantly affect your health. You might work in a job that exposes you to greater health risks.

Social and community context: Mistrust of the medical community may be deeply entrenched in some pockets of the Black communities. An underlying theme throughout all the SDOHs is the impact of systemic racism. Historically racist attitudes and policies have led to the disparities mentioned above.

Now let's look at how these factors can influence Black people's experiences with certain health conditions.

HEART DISEASE

Despite having lower rates than white people, Black people in the United States are 30 per cent more likely to die from heart disease. It's also more likely to affect Black adults at a younger age.

As for many of the conditions where health disparities exist, the reasons are complex. But it's worth noting that Black Americans have higher rates of the major risk factors for heart disease — hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and smoking.

While genetics and SDOHs may affect your ability to control these risk factors, they are modifiable and offer an opportunity to close the health gap.

11 conditions that affect black people



▲ The reasons for this are often some combination of genetic, social, and economic factors.

OBESITY

Black adults in the United States are 30 per cent more likely to have obesity than white adults. This disparity is even greater for children and teens (50 per cent) and women (50 per cent). Obesity is a risk factor for several conditions on this list and can contribute to worse outcomes for other conditions.

This disparity often has economic and geographic causes. Disparities in income affect people's ability to buy healthy food options. Some people may live in food deserts or spaces where physical activity is challenging or unsafe.

DIABETES

Black adults in the United States are twice as likely as white adults to develop type 2 diabetes. That's when your body can't produce enough insulin to keep your blood sugar levels down. This disparity is largely due to genetics, high obesity rates, and socioeconomic factors.

Complications from diabetes, like kidney disease, are also more common among Black people. Efforts to control risk factors like obesity and a sedentary lifestyle are of utmost importance.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), 55 per cent of Black adults in the United States have high blood pressure (hypertension). That's one of the highest rates in the world. If you're Black, it's also more likely to affect you earlier in life than it

affects white people.

The AHA lists obesity and diabetes as two major contributing factors. But stress and racial discrimination might also play a role in this disparity.

The same steps you take to control other risk factors related to heart health can help reduce your risk of hypertension or control your blood pressure if it's already high.

STROKE

A stroke occurs when enough blood can't get to your brain, usually due to a blockage in an artery. As with other conditions relating to cardiovascular health, Black adults in the United States are more likely to have strokes and more likely to die from them.

High blood pressure and diabetes are major risk factors for stroke. But so are high cholesterol, stress, and smoking. A heart-healthy lifestyle can also help reduce your risk of stroke, even if you have a family history of it.

SICKLE CELL ANEMIA

Sickle cell anemia (SCA) is a rare genetic disease that affects hemoglobin in your red blood cells. It affects how much oxygen your red blood cells can deliver to your organs and tissues. While only 1 in every 16,300 Hispanic American babies is born with SCA, the condition affects 1 in every 365 Black newborns. About 1 in every 13 Black babies carries the gene and can pass it on to the next generation. But disparities in healthcare access and quality can also affect people with SCA. Many have trouble obtaining the pain medications they need to manage their conditions because of racist beliefs about

Black people's perception of pain or concerns over opioid misuse. SCA is a lifelong condition with symptoms starting in childhood. Finding a culturally competent doctor who understands the impact of the disease on Black families can make a big difference.

CANCER

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), Black people in the United States have higher death rates and shorter survival rates than any other racial group for most cancers.

The ACS also acknowledges that these disparities are more due to socioeconomic factors and access to care than to any biological reason.

Some of these cancers include:

► Breast cancer: Black women are 41 per cent more likely to die from breast cancer than white women.

► Prostate cancer: Black men are 73 per cent more likely to develop prostate cancer than white men and are twice as likely to die of it.

► Colorectal cancer: Largely due to disparities in screening, Black people are 20 per cent more likely to develop colorectal cancer. This disparity only developed in the last 30 years.

► Lung cancer: Black men are 12 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer than white men. Both Black men and women are more likely to be diagnosed younger.

► Multiple myeloma: This blood cancer is twice as common in Black people than in white people.

KIDNEY DISEASE

According to the National Kidney



Foundation (NKF), Black people in the United States are more than three times as likely as white people to have kidney failure. They attribute this to higher rates of risk factors in People of Color. Such risk factors include diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure.

Doctors use a test called the estimated glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) test to assess your kidney function. But this test often estimates Black people as having higher kidney function than they actually do. This can delay detection and treatment.

The NKF has eliminated this calculation and is working to ensure that labs across the country follow suit.

The key to management is early detection. But because a higher percentage of People of Color are uninsured or lack quality healthcare access, many do not detect kidney disease until its late stages.

ASTHMA

Asthma occurs when the airways in your lungs narrow, making it difficult to breathe.

Not surprisingly, this condition disproportionately affects children in communities with poor air quality. Black communities have been the target of environmental racism, resulting in exposure to higher levels of air pollution.

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, asthma is 50 per cent more common in Black people in the United States than in white people. They're also five times more likely to visit the emergency department due to asthma and three times more likely to die from it.

But these rates have been declining since the introduction of the Affordable Care Act when many more people gained insurance and access to health services.

HIV AND AIDS

African Americans felt the brunt of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. That disparity is even more pronounced today, with Black people making up 42 per cent of all new HIV diagnoses in the United States.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the impact is felt greatest among women, young people, and men who have sex with men. About two-thirds of Black U.S. adults and adolescents living with HIV live in southern states.

HIV treatment options have improved significantly since the 80s. Antiretroviral therapy can decrease the amount of virus in your body to where it's almost undetectable. This lowers the risk of passing the virus on to another person.

COVID-19

The early months of the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the impact of racial disparities in our healthcare system and our country as a whole.

In May 2020, Black people were more than three times more likely to be admitted to the hospital for Covid-19 than white people. They also died at almost twice the rate.

Many of the conditions that are more prevalent in the Black community, like obesity and sickle cell disease, can increase your risk of getting seriously ill from the virus. Issues of healthcare access and environmental racism only intensified the impact.

A year into the pandemic, Black Americans were still less likely to be vaccinated than white Americans. This vaccine hesitancy was in part fueled by medical mistrust rooted in historic injustices involving vaccines. It took until 2 years into the pandemic for Black Americans to be vaccinated at the same rate. **Healthline**

STRESS and anxiety can impair many aspects of your health, including your vision.

You may experience vision loss or other vision symptoms, like blurriness, light sensitivity, or loss of visual acuity.

Chronic stress may speed up the development of eye diseases like macular degeneration or glaucoma. In the short term, stress and behaviors related to stress may contribute to dry eyes.

Stress can also lead to psychogenic blindness. This is blindness with a psychological cause and no known structural problem.

CAN STRESS AND ANXIETY CAUSE VISION PROBLEMS?

The idea that stress may lead to vision loss isn't new. It's believed to date back at least 3,000 years.

Science has come a long way since then, but modern research also supports the idea that stress may contribute to vision loss.

CAN STRESS CAUSE BLURRY VISION?

Stress can potentially contribute to the development of blurry vision in several ways, such as:

Drying out your eyes: In a 2022 review of studies, researchers found that dry eye disease was associated with depression and anxiety. Blurry vision is a potential symptom of dry eyes.

Medication side effects: Some medications used to treat anxiety or stress, such as tricyclic antidepressants, can lead to symptoms like pupil dilation and blurry vision.

Lead to retinal disease: Research suggests that perceived stress is a risk factor for central serous chorioretinopathy (CSCR). CSCR results in fluid collection in the macula (the central part of the retina), which can cause blurry vision.

Glaucoma: In a 2021 study, researchers found evidence that anxiety and depression contributed to the progression of glaucoma. Blurry vision is often one of the first symptoms of glaucoma.

CAN STRESS CAUSE BLINDNESS?

Blindness is loss of vision ranging from mild to complete absence of sight.

Temporary vision loss can occur without any indication of damage to the structures of your eye. When this happens, it's called psychogenic blindness or conversion disorder. It often occurs after a traumatic event.

OTHER WAYS STRESS AFFECTS VISION

When you're stressed, your body produces hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, which cause changes to your body, including:

- ▶ increased heart rate
- ▶ increased breathing rate
- ▶ increased breakdown of fat and carbohydrates
- ▶ reduced intestinal activity

Over time, these hormones might

Can stress cause vision problems or blindness?



damage your eye by reducing blood flow to your retina and optic nerve and increasing pressure in your eye.

These changes can contribute to the development of many eye diseases that cause symptoms such as:

- ▶ light sensitivity
- ▶ tunnel vision
- ▶ eyestrain
- ▶ double vision
- ▶ eye pain
- ▶ reduced visual acuity

How to treat stress-related vision problems
Treating stress-related vision problems largely centers around reducing stress. Some ways you may be able to reduce and manage stress in your life include:

- ▶ getting regular exercise
- ▶ eating a balanced diet full of nutrient-dense foods

Adding relaxing activities into your daily routine, such as:

- ▶ yoga
- ▶ walks in nature
- ▶ deep breathing exercises
- ▶ prioritizing getting enough sleep
- ▶ reducing your caffeine intake
- ▶ talking with a therapist

WHEN TO GET MEDICAL HELP

Seek prompt medical attention from an eye doctor anytime you notice changes to your vision, such as:

- ▶ sudden loss of vision
- ▶ blurry vision
- ▶ trouble reading

You may also want to visit a mental health professional if you don't feel like you can manage your stress or it's disrupting your life.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT STRESS AND VISION

Here are some frequently asked questions

people have about stress and vision.

CAN STRESS CAUSE VISION PROBLEMS IN ONE EYE?

Stress may potentially contribute to conditions that affect blood flow to the eye, leading to conditions that can impair vision in one eye.

CAN STRESS CAUSE OPTIC NERVE SWELLING?

Stress may potentially cause optic nerve swelling due to hormones that can increase intracranial pressure, which is pressure within the brain.

WHAT IS PSYCHOGENIC BLINDNESS?

"Psychogenic" means a condition has a psychological cause instead of a physical one. Another name for psychogenic blindness is conversion disorder.

People with conversion disorder often have vision loss with no evidence of physical eye damage.

CAN YOU GO BLIND FROM EMOTIONAL TRAUMA?

Psychological trauma can lead to blindness, but it doesn't usually cause complete blindness. You may have reduced visual function. It doesn't mean you can't see anything at all.

WHAT IS STREFF SYNDROME?

Streff syndrome is a psychogenic condition that causes visual problems like blurry vision and nearsightedness. It's most common in girls 6–12 years old who experience emotional stress. **Healthline**

AROUND THE WORLD IN PICTURES



▲ A full moon is seen with a dragon lantern decoration prepared for Lunar New Year, at Fo Guang Shan Dong Zen Buddhist Temple in Jenjarom, Malaysia



▲ A man practices the Tummo meditation technique in sub-zero temperatures at a waterfall in Korca, Albania



▲ Animal rights activists deface Rome's Fountain of Lions in Piazza del Popolo in Rome.



▲ A dog cools off in a fountain during a heat wave in Santiago, Chile



▲ Revelers dressed as nuns participate in the Venice Carnival in Venice, Italy.



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



▲ Municipal workers sweep up straw during a protest by farmers over price pressures, taxes and green regulation, in Paris, France



▲ A man poses as his acquaintance takes pictures on a street in the town of Vyborg, Russia

Pochettino under fire as Chelsea crash, birthday boy Hojlund sparks Man Utd

MAURICIO Pochettino's problems mounted as struggling Chelsea crashed to a dismal 4-2 defeat against Wolves, while Manchester United striker Rasmus Hojlund celebrated his 21st birthday with a goal in Sunday's 3-0 win against West Ham.

Premier League leaders Liverpool face a crucial clash with title rivals Arsenal later on Sunday, but it was Chelsea's travails that took the spotlight before the showdown at the Emirates Stadium.

Languishing in 11th place, Chelsea were booed off by furious fans after Matheus Cunha's hat-trick condemned them to a second successive defeat.

Chelsea were thrashed by Liverpool 4-1 on Wednesday and their week to forget finished with an even more embarrassing loss as Wolves completed the double over the woeful west Londoners.

Cole Palmer put Chelsea ahead with a composed angled finish from Moises Caicedo's defence-splitting pass in the 19th minute.

But Chelsea's lead lasted just three minutes, with Cunha's shot taking a hefty deflection off Thiago Silva to leave Blues keeper Djordje Petrovic wrong-footed as it whistled into the net.

Pochettino wore an exasperated look in the 43rd minute when Rayan Ait Nouri's shot deflected in for an own goal off Chelsea defender Axel Disasi.

The already fraught atmosphere turned even more toxic in the 63rd minute as Pedro Neto teed up Cunha to drive in Wolves' third goal.

Cunha's 82nd minute penalty, awarded when he was fouled by Malo Gusto, capped a miserable afternoon for Pochettino, who took no consolation from Silva's close-range finish in the 86th minute.

It has been a dispiriting first season in



▲ Inspired by the revitalised Hojlund, Manchester United made it three consecutive wins in all competitions as they climbed above West Ham into sixth place.

charge for Pochettino and the former Tottenham boss is certain to face calls for his sacking unless results improve quickly.

Chelsea co-owner Todd Boehly has already shown his ruthless side by sacking Graham Potter after less than seven months in charge last term.

HOJLUND LEADS UNITED REVIVAL

Inspired by the revitalised Hojlund, Manchester United made it three consecutive wins in all competitions as they climbed above West Ham into sixth place.

Finally emerging from a slow start to his first season with United following his move from Atalanta, Hojlund got his birthday party started in the 23rd minute at Old Trafford.

Casemiro's pass reached Hojlund and the Denmark striker cleverly took a touch to find space for a fierce drive that flashed past Alphonse Areola from just inside the area.

After failing to score in the league until December 26, Hojlund now has five goals in his last six games in all competitions.

Alejandro Garnacho was left unmarked in the area for a 49th minute shot that deflected in off West Ham defender Nayef Aguerd.

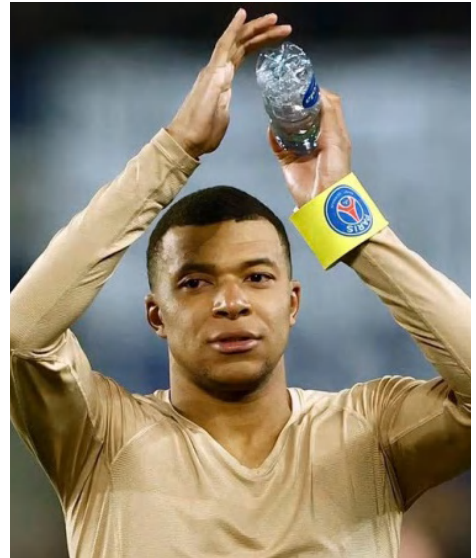
United manager Erik ten Hag and West Ham boss David Moyes had laid wreaths on the pitch before kick-off to mark the anniversary of the 1958 Munich air crash that killed eight United players on the way back from a European Cup game in Belgrade.

United's current crop cannot be compared to the 'Busby Babes' who perished in Munich, but Ten Hag's team at least marked their memory with the kind of enterprising display that was the hallmark of their predecessors.

Fittingly, it was Garnacho – United's brightest young star – who wrapped up the points with a cool finish in the 84th minute.

Nottingham Forest are two points above the relegation zone after a 1-1 draw at Bournemouth.

(AFP)



▲ France captain Kylian Mbappe will join LaLiga giants Real Madrid when his contract with Paris St Germain finishes at the end of the season

Mbappe to join Real at end of season

FRANCE captain Kylian Mbappe will join LaLiga giants Real Madrid when his contract with Paris St Germain finishes at the end of the season, Le Parisien and ESPN reported on Saturday.

Mbappe said last year he would not renew his contract at the Ligue 1 side when it expired at the end of the 2023-24 campaign, allowing him to move on to another club on a free transfer.

French newspaper Le Parisien and ESPN, citing sources, said the 25-year-old striker would announce a pre-contract agreement with the 14-times European champions next week.

Media reports last September said Mbappe had agreed to forego loyalty bonuses worth up to 100 million euros (\$107.84 million) to leave PSG as a free agent.

Mbappe was heavily linked with a move to Real in 2022 but announced a contract extension with PSG just weeks before the transfer window opened.

(Reuters)

LeBron James tight-lipped amid questions about his playing future

LOS Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James refrained on Saturday from committing to his team beyond the current NBA season.

The four-time NBA champion has a player-option for the 2024-25 NBA season, which gives him the power to decide whether to stay with the Lakers for another year or become an unrestricted free agent. James sparked speculation about his playing future when he posted an hourglass emoji on his social media account following his team's blowout loss to the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday and ahead of the NBA's Feb. 8 trade deadline. In his first interview since the social media post, the 39-year-old was asked on Saturday ahead of his team's game at the New York Knicks if he has spent time thinking about the contract decision he will need to make in the close season. "No," said James, whose Lakers are ninth in the 15-team Western Conference with a 25-25 record. The NBA's all-time leading scorer sat out the Lakers' 114-105 win against the Eastern Conference-leading Boston Celtics on Thursday with a sore ankle. (Reuters)

Arsenal beat lacklustre Liverpool to close gap

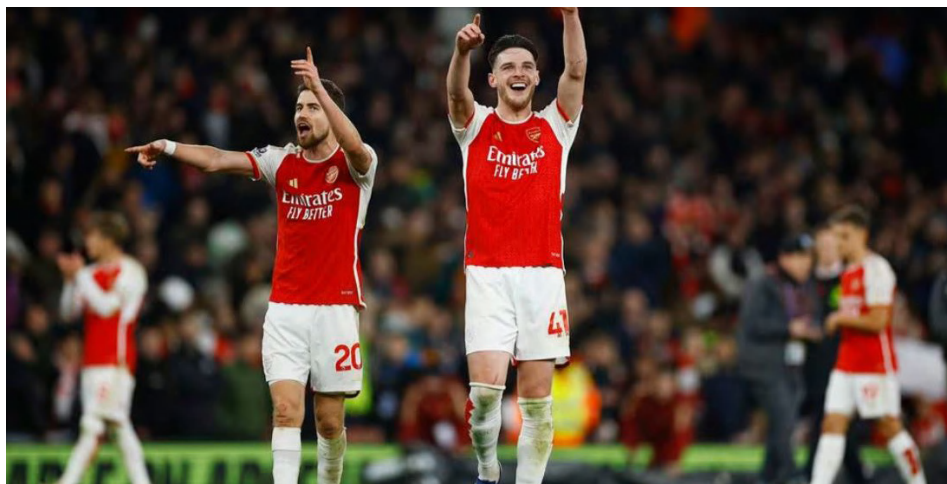
LONDON - Arsenal spiced up an already intriguing Premier League title race as they beat lacklustre leaders Liverpool 3-1 to slice the gap to two points and move into second spot on Sunday.

Arsenal deserved the points that lifted them above Manchester City although they would not have expected a helping hand from Virgil van Dijk and Alisson whose comic mix-up allowed Gabriel Martinelli to restore their lead in the 67th minute.

Substitute Leandro Trossard then soothed any late nerves among the Emirates faithful as he secured the victory in stoppage time with a shot through Alisson's legs.

Bukayo Saka had given Arsenal an early lead with a cool finish in the 14th minute but a Gabriel own goal on the stroke of halftime undid all of their good work.

Heading for only their second league defeat of the season, both in north London, Liverpool's frustrations boiled over as Ibrahima Konate was sent off in the closing minutes for a second booking after a foul on Kai Havertz. Arsenal's win lifted them to second on 49 points to Liverpool's 51 with both



▲ Arsenal's Jorginho and Declan Rice celebrate after the match.

clubs having played 23 games. Champions Manchester City, who play on Monday, have 46 from 21 games.

For the fourth Premier League game in a row between the sides Arsenal got their noses in front early. Liverpool were sluggish and Saka had already gone close to scoring with a glancing header from Martinelli's cross before the visitors were picked apart by a silky passing move.

Martin Odegaard's first-time pass released Havertz and although the former Chelsea striker's shot lacked conviction it rebounded off Alisson and Saka took a touch before confidently sweeping home the rebound.

There was a conspicuous lack of a response by a disjointed Liverpool and they could count themselves fortunate to reach halftime on level terms, courtesy of an Arsenal gift. (Reuters)



▲South Africa goalkeeper Ronwen Fernandez.



Will South Africa ever learn to love its team?

WILL South African goalkeeper Ronwen Williams’ penalty-defending heroics reignite South Africa’s passion for its men’s international team? It might take more than that.

Williams saved four Cape Verde penalties in a shootout after an uninspiring 0-0 draw after extra time, setting up an Africa Cup of Nations semifinal with mighty Nigeria.

But how many supporters back home in South Africa will have even seen his game-saving triumph in Yamoussoukro?

South Africa is a nation of sports fans. The exploits of its world champion rugby side the Springboks have warmed millions of hearts across its racial divides.

Cricket is also popular, and several soccer fans who spoke to AFP praised the inspirational women’s football team – Banyana Banyana (“The Girls”).

Hearts

But Bafana Bafana (“The Boys”) have failed to capture the nation’s hearts.

Attendance at home internationals has fallen into the hundreds, even though fans flock to cheer club sides like the Sundowns and the Pirates.

In a good luck message for the team before Saturday’s Afcon quarterfinal clash, President Cyril Ramaphosa admitted he was surprised they’d got so far.

“To reach where they are – when we didn’t expect them to get there – is a really wonderful achievement,” he said, during a voter registration drive.

A glance at the team’s record might explain his earlier pessimism. Collins and his mates had taken a table under the screen, bought in some lagers and brandy and were following the action, but much of the restaurant was empty.

Locals couldn’t have been watching much at home, either, since the township was blacked out during one of South Africa’s notorious rolling power cuts.

Victor Khoza, a 58-year-old carpenter and interior designer, shrugged.

“These guys have brought

disappointment,” he said. “It’s that bad, people are without hope. I might go home to sleep at halftime.”

But if he had he would have missed Williams’ saves, maybe now the fans will take note?

South Africa was banned from African football during the apartheid era, but made a promising debut after democracy was established.

In 1996, two years after Nelson Mandela was elected, South Africa hosted the Africa Cup of Nations and won the cup on home soil.

Point

This proved to be a high point, however.

South Africa became the only country on the continent to host a football World Cup in 2010, and its team crashed out in the group stage.

The squad didn’t even qualify for the next three World Cups, nor for the previous Afcon, failing to make it to Cameroon in 2022.

The South African performance in this year’s African tournament in Ivory Coast could be framed as an inspiring comeback story.

But the competition has failed to set the long-suffering South African fans alight with passion: few hope for much from the team.

By Saturday, Bafana Bafana had reached the quarterfinal, facing off with island nation Cape Verde.

When AFP reporters hit the bars and restaurants of Soweto, a huge former black township just outside Johannesburg, they nevertheless found little enthusiasm.

“They haven’t convinced a lot of people that they’re worth their time,” said 27-year-old engineer Collins Ishabalala.

(Supersport)

Success possible for DR Congo 50 years after last triumph

The Democratic Republic of Congo suddenly have a chance of unexpected Africa Cup of Nations success as they prepare to take on hosts Ivory Coast in Wednesday’s semifinal in Abidjan 50 years after their last triumph. he Congolese might be perennial participants, this being their 19th Cup of Nations tournament, but they have long since not been considered a major force in the African game, losing the prominent position they once held after decades of political instability, economic and infrastructure decline.

As the former Zaire, they won the Cup of Nations in 1974 and the same year went to the World Cup in West Germany as the continent’s sole representative but have had no success since and did not even qualify for the last edition of the continental tournament in Cameroon two years ago.

But they now have a real opportunity, even if up against the hosts in the last four.

“We are in the semifinals and, of course, it would be stupid not to believe we can go on and get into the final,” said coach Sebastien Desabre.

“But it will be difficult, and our opponent is a top team. We will have to produce a top performance but it’s obvious, when you are in the semifinals you first want to go to the final. And then, if you have the chance to go to the final, to win it. We will do everything to ensure we leave without any regrets.”

DR Congo reached the last eight in the Ivory Coast without winning a game but were convincing in their come-from-behind 3-1 quarterfinal victory over Guinea in Abidjan on Friday.

They had drawn their three Group F matches yet finished in second place and in the last-

16 drew 1-1 with Egypt, before edging them on post-match penalties after extra time.

“Our first victory (over Guinea) came at the right time because we’re gaining momentum in the competition. You can say that we’ve only won once but consider we also did not lose in this tournament,” added the journeyman French-born coach, who has worked on the continent for more than a decade

His squad is primarily made up of players born in Europe but with a Congolese parent, reflective of the modern African game where national teams place a high store on players at European clubs.

Pulling together a squad of differing backgrounds – there are Belgian, English, French and Swiss-born players in the Congolese squad – has been Desabre’s success.



▲DR Congo Coach Sébastien Desabre.

Yellow Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon in pics



▲ The over 700 runners who took part in the Yellow Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon on Saturday in Lobamba.



▲ Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima (c) took part in the aerobics after the Yellow Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon on Saturday in Lobamba.



▲ Winner of the Yellow Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon males winner Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) Athlete Melusi Khumalo crossing the finishing line.



▲ A team from Lactalis was part of the race. They will also be part of the runners in the next road race, Lactalis Eswatini #ResolutionRun set for February 17.



▲ People from Cheshire Home were also part of the half marathon.



▲ Runners representing different companies and teams pose for a picture.



▲ The event was open to all people.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders MC Chairman Muza Masuku (l) part of the runners.



New netball knockout tournament

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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THE Eswatini National Netball Association has announced a new knockout tournament.

The tournament will be sponsored by the Ministry of Health under the cervical Cancer Wing with an undisclosed amount of money.

The tournament is set to feature all Premier division teams and the regional champions between February 10 and 18 at Olymp Africa.

ENNA Secretary Bongiwe Gamedze confirmed the news when contacted by the Eswatini Daily news.

“We will be having a new tournament that will feature both Premier and one regional team. We are still waiting for the name of the regional team from the regional committee,” she said.

She further mentioned that they were still working on the logistics of the new tournament.

“We will be having a draw on Tuesday and we are also finalising the prize breakdown with the sponsor,” she said.

Some of the teams that are expected to feature in the tournament include Correctional, REPS, UEDF, Mbabane Raiders and Olymp Africa Centre, among others.

The association recently concluded the Swaziland Building Society first round which was won by Correctional and REPS in the Male and female categories.

▲Eswatini National Netball Association secretary Bongiwe Gamedze.



▲Royal Leopard Coach Edwin Matsebula reacts during their 4-2 win over Manzini Wanderers on Saturday in the MTN Premier League.

We need to be consistent — Royal Leopard coach

ROYAL Leopard head coach Edwin Matsebula says they need to be consistent if they are to compete for the league title.

Matsebula said this after their 4-2 win over Manzini Wanderers on Saturday at Mavuso Sports Centre.

“We need to be consistent and avoid complacency if we want to compete for the title by treating each game as a cup final until the end,” he said.

The former National under -17 Coach further urged his troops to improve defensively.

“We need to work on our defence as we got carried away during the second half goals,” he said.

The police side are currently sitting at the summit of the log with 31 points after 16 matches.

Leopard also paraded Ghanaian striker Felix Tetteh from the match against the hub giants.

‘Ingwemabalabala’ needed goals from Muzi’ Mzoro’ Dlamini, Junior Magagula, Banele Shongwe and Lungelo Simelane to brush aside the ‘Weslians’.

Wanderers scored their consolation goals through Phathizwe Mabuza and Ndumiso Dlamini in front of close to 1 000 fans.

Nyanga cries foul over Leopard loan deal



▲Manzini Wanderers Coach Nyanga Hlophe.

MANZINI Wanderers head coach Nyanga ‘Crooks’ Hlophe has cried foul, challenging their current loan deal with Royal Leopard. The deal involves two players Majaha Nhlabatsi and Lindelwa Dlodlu.

Hlophe decried the absence of the duo, who are both on-loan from the police side after their 2-4 loss to Ingwemabalabala on Saturday at Mavuso Sports Centre.

“The situation of the two players really kills the spirit of fair play, as such things did not happen in the past where players used to move between the forces and civilian teams freely. Such agreements kill the spirit of fair play, and hinder the progress of our football,” he said.

He further lamented the absence of the two players in their squad.

“These are our key players and I was forced to do a makeshift replacement in their positions, which affected us a lot. I am happy with the overall performance of the team despite the loss. However, I am adamant that we will survive relegation at the end of the season,” he said.

The crowd-pullers also confirmed the signing of three international players in Hasan Balogun (Nigeria), Zicco Luyaba (DR Congo) and Junior from Mozambique.

The ‘Weslians’ Chairman of the MC Berger Nxumalo said they were still finalising paperwork for the three players.

“We are happy to have the trio on board. This is part of our efforts to assemble a strong squad that will help us survive relegation,” he said.

The international trio has joined the likes of Simanga Shongwe, Xolani ‘Papi’ Sikhondze and Sibusiso Mkhonta in the list of new signings for the struggling hub crowd-pullers.

Green Mamba drops to 4th spot

By Ntokozo Magongo
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LEAGUE title chasers and title pretenders are being separated with each passing week as the 2023/24 season reaches its zenith.

With ten games remaining, defending champions, Green Mamba who shockingly lost 2-0 to Illovo FC on Saturday, find themselves on the fourth spot, three points behind log leaders, Royal Leopard.

Army side, Young Buffaloes piled pressure on the defending champions, Green Mamba with their 1-0 win over Rangers at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium on Sunday.

The ‘Correctional Service’ side had been on top of the table for the majority of the season and even won the E100k first round incentive.

The Ernest Mavuso-led side has recorded shocking results recently, losing 1-0 to struggling Manzini Wanderers and the last being the 2-0 defeat by newcomers Illovo on Saturday at Mayaluka Stadium.

Meanwhile, Nsingizini Hotspurs celebrated their President Derrick Shiba’s birthday with a 1-0 win over



▲ Green Mamba Football Club.

Manzini Sea Birds on Sunday at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium.

Moneni Pirates recorded their first win of the season on Sunday, beating cross town rivals, Denver Sundowns 1-0 at Mayaluka Stadium but remain rooted at the bottom of the log with ten points, two points behind second from the bottom cross-town rivals, Manzini Wanderers.

The MTN Premier League will take a break this coming weekend, giving way to the Ingwenyama Cup quarter-finals.

MTN League week 16 results:			
Played on Saturday:			
M. Wanderers	2-4	R. Leopard	
Ezulwini	0-1	M. Highlanders	
Illovo	2-0	G. Mamba	
M. Swallows	4-0	Madlenya	
Played on Sunday:			
Rangers	0-1	Y. Buffaloes	
M. Sea Birds	1-0	N. Hotspurs	
D. Sundowns	0-1	M. Pirates	
Next attraction, Week 17:			
D. Sundowns	vs	Green Mamba	
M. Pirates	vs	Y. Buffaloes	
N. Hotspurs	vs	M. Swallows	
R. Leopard	vs	M. Highlanders	
Rangers	vs	M. Sea Birds	
Madlenya	vs	M. Wanderers	
Illovo	vs	Tambuti	



▲ Rangers player former Mbabane Highlanders Musa Dlamini.

PPK Rangers to be without Musa in Ingwenyama Cup last 8

By Ntokozo Magongo
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IT’S a blow for Pigg’s Peak Rangers as they will be without their newly signed striker, Musa Dlamini when they face Mbabane Swallows in the Ingwenyama Cup Quarter-finals.

The National First Division League side boasted their squad before the second window registration closes on Friday by adding the former Mbabane Highlanders forward. He became surplus to requirements at the ‘black and white’ outfit, signing for the Northern Hhohho based club.

The Ingwenyama Cup returns the coming weekend with mouth-watering games that will see three times winners, Mbabane Swallows visiting the only team outside the premier league remaining in the tournament, in Pigg’s Peak rangers..

Dlamini is cup tied having featured for his former club, Highlanders in the 2-0 win over Pigg’s Peak Black Swallows in the last 32 games and in the 5-3 win over Louis XIV in the last 16 stage.

The thrilling matches in the quarter-finals will see Mbabane Highlanders playing Ezulwini United for the second time in a week after the MTN Premier League game on Saturday at Mavuso Sports Centre. The latter will be dealt a major blow as they will be without defender Mandla Palma as he also played for Highlanders in the same tournament before signing with the former Tinyosi club.

Defending champions, Green Mamba will face MoMo Cup two-time winners Nsingizini Hotspurs with Young Buffaloes facing Madlenya to complete the last eight fixtures.

INGWENYAMA CUP QUARTER-FINALS:

Young Buffaloes	vs	Madlenya
M. Highlanders	vs	Ezulwini United
Green Mamba	vs	Nsingizini Hotspurs
M. Swallows	vs	Pigg’s Peak Rangers

Nsingizini Hotspurs add two more signings

By Sibusiso Masilela
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AMBITIOUS Nsingizini Hotspurs have made two more signings before the transfer deadline on Friday.

The green and white ensemble enlisted the services of Tambankulu Celtics defender Nkosingiphile Shongwe and promoted their development product Muzi Mkhonta.

The two players have added the team’s new signings such as Alvin Shabashi, Nyasha Nyatuli and Yekisizwe Khumalo among others.

The team’s Public Relations Officer Mnotfo Dlamini welcomed the new signings.

“We are happy with the arrival of the new players and we are confident that they will add value in the team,” he said.

He further thanked the club president



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs President Derrick Shiba who celebrated his birthday on Sunday welcomes Nkosingiphile Shongwe.

Derrick Shiba for his continued investment in the team.

“We are grateful for the support of the President for making sure that we remain competitive in all competitions”.

The two players are both set to make their debut against Manzini Sea Birds in the MTN Premier League clash.

‘Insingizi yezulu’ will also take Green Mamba in the Ingwenyama Cup quarter-finals.

2024 MRPA season set to kickoff in March

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE 2024 Dixie’s International Pool is set to kick-off in March.

This was revealed by Manzini Regional Pool Association Secretary Musa Dlamini when giving updates on the Association.

“We are likely to kick-off the new season in March after last season’s presentation in February. We are still working on some logistics with the sponsor (Dixie’s International),” he said.

He also urged teams to prepare themselves for the new season.

He went on to thank the Eswatini Cue Sports Association for introducing the recent Eswatini Pool festival.

Grateful

“We are grateful to the mother body for introducing the festival which helped our players gain International exposure,” he said.

The recent pool festival featured local and international players under the singles category.

The international tournament was funded by the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council to the tune of E45 000.

Manzini Pool club are the reigning champions



▲ Dixie’s International E40 000 League defending champions Manzini Pool club.

of the annual Regional Pool league after they successfully won the 2023 title where they took home the E10 000 first prize money.



Hojlund sparks Man Utd

Page 20



PPK Rangers to be without Musa

Page 23

Eswatini Daily News

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Sport



Green Mamba drops to 4th spot

... Defending league champions Green Mamba have dropped to fourth position after Young Buffaloes beat Rangers FC on Sunday to move to the third position as league continues to separate title chasers from title pretenders with ten games remaining. *Page 23*