



Storm damage: 858 people affected, 143 households in ruins



By Bahle Gama
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MONDAY’S devastating storm has affected at least 858 people and caused damage to 143 homes. That is according to the information released by the National Disaster and Management Agency (NDMA). The agency indicated in its storm situational report that the country was hit by a severe hailstorm on Monday, January 5 causing extensive damage in the Hhohho and Manzini regions.

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Taiwan brings healthcare, warmth to Nkhaba residents

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That is according to the information released by the National Disaster and Management Agency (NDMA). The agency indicated in its storm situational report that the country was hit by a severe hailstorm on Monday, January 5 causing extensive damage in the Hhohho and Manzini regions.

It was characterized by heavy rains, strong winds, and hail resulting in significant destruction across the affected areas. At around 6:30 p.m., what started as a drizzle escalated into a heavy hailstorm that caused an electricity blackout in all parts of the capital city and surrounding areas. In Mbabane, it only calmed at around 8 p.m.

Preliminary assessment findings showed that the storm had a widespread impact disrupting the living conditions of approximately 858 people and affecting 143 households.

The constituencies reportedly affected by the storm include Mbabane West and East, Lobamba Lomdzala, Piggs Peak, Lobamba, Mhlangatane, and Ndzingeni.

In addition to the residential damage, household assets including furniture and vehicles were also affected by the storm. The storm also caused damage to critical infrastructure, including two schools, businesses, telecommunication systems, and electricity lines, resulting in power outages. Roads were also affected by fallen trees and



▲Roofing of a homestead was blown off during the storm.



▲A tarpaulin is used as roofing on a damaged house.



▲Maize plants were also damaged by the storm.



▲Remains of the hail on some fields.

other debris.

“The agricultural sector, particularly maize and bean crops, suffered substantial losses, posing a significant threat to household food security. While there were no reported deaths or displacements, there were three reported injuries,” reads the report.

The NDMA and Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society (BERCS) conducted a rapid assessment to ascertain the impact of the storm and provide emergency relief materials to those in need of temporary

shelter.

In response to the storm, the NDMA and BERCS swiftly initiated an emergency response and recovery interventions which resulted in the distribution of 13 tarpaulins, providing temporal shelter to affected households.

“The ongoing assessment will be completed in the next two days,” it reads.

The Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) also responded to blackout reports by customers about the storm as some workers

were visible and seen restoring electricity cables in some parts of the capital city and surrounding areas.

EEC Marketing and Corporate Communications Manager Khaya Mavuso said several feeder lines had been restored and residents in those areas did not have to deal with an extended electricity blackout.

The restored feeder lines include substations at Nkoyoyo, Ngwenya one and two, Siphocosini, Usuthu, Mankayane, and Malkerns.

Minister Shakantu arrives in Morocco for high-level conference

By Ncaba Ntshakala

THE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Pholile Shakantu is set to partake in a High-Level Ministerial Conference on Middle-Income Countries in Morocco.

She arrived in the Kingdom of Morocco on Monday. The conference, held under the theme “Solutions to Development Challenges of Middle-Income Countries in a Changing World,” brought together ministers and other high-level officials from across the globe to discuss pressing issues faced by middle-income nations.

Prior to the conference, Minister Shakantu paid a courtesy visit to the Eswatini Embassy in Morocco, underscoring the importance of diplomatic relations and regional cooperation.

The Eswatini Embassy in Morocco is also accredited to Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Egypt, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Ghana and Tunisia.

The Minister’s visit to Morocco follows a

productive five-day trip to Taiwan, where she met with President Tsai Ing-wen, President-elect Lai Ching-te, and signed a joint declaration that highlights and reaffirms the rock-solid Taiwan-Eswatini relationship and promises to strengthen future cooperation between the two countries.

Organized on the initiative of the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Development Programme, the High-Level Ministerial Conference began its work on Monday with a meeting of experts focusing on key themes for middle-income countries, such as South-South and triangular cooperation, climate financing, innovative sources of financing and the middle-income trap.

The conference in Rabbat brings together middle-income countries, the UN system, international and regional financial institutions, and key development partners to identify new and innovative approaches required to support the development needs of these countries and meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

This provides a platform for open dialogue and exchange of best practices on a range of



▲On the occasion of the High-Level Ministerial Conference on Middle-Income Countries, Morocco Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita held talks today in Rabat with his Eswatini counterpart, Senator Pholile Shakantu.

topics relevant to middle-income countries, including sustainable development. It also enhances the countries to find pathways to economic growth while protecting the environment and ensuring social equity.

The conference also addresses poverty and inequality through targeted policies and programs and leveraging technology to accelerate progress and achieve development goals. Further, the High-Level Ministerial Conference on Middle-Income Countries focuses on building resilience and mitigating the impact of climate change.

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, and the

President of ECOSOC, Paula Narváez Ojeda are attending the conference.

The Conference will also be attended by Cape Verde’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rui Alberto De Figueiredo Soares, Cameroon’s Minister of External Relations, Mbella Mbella Lejeune, Comoro’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in charge of the Francophonie and the Diaspora, Dhoiher Dhoukamel, Gabon’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, in charge of Sub-regional Integration and Gabonese Living Abroad, Régis Onanga Ndiaye, and Nigeria’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Maitama Tuggar.

E10m RDF boost for Ngwempisi since 2015

... Ministry reveals investments as 65 seater bus is handed to Macudvulwini Multipurpose Cooperative in the constituency

By Ncaba Ntshakala

NGWEMPISI Inkhundla received a double dose of good news, with the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development highlighting that over E10 million has been invested in the constituency since 2015 through the Regional Development Fund (RDF). This was revealed as the Minister of Tinkhundla Administration and Development Sikhumbuzo Dlamini handed over a brand new 65-seater bus worth E2.1 million to Macudvulwini Multipurpose Cooperative in the constituency. The announcement accentuates the government's commitment to uplifting communities through targeted development initiatives. During the handover ceremony, Minister Dlamini emphasised the RDF's instrumental role in supporting various projects across Ngwempisi, in many sectors, costing E10,026,144.01. The Minister further expressed that such projects enhance development and help alleviate poverty in constituencies.

"Such projects directly address the objective of the Regional Development Fund, which is poverty alleviation or eradication in each of the four regions of Eswatini," stated Minister Dlamini. "As it has been evidenced today, the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development through the Regional Development Fund has continued to be a flagship of success in spearheading Government's programmes focused on rural development and poverty reduction with special emphasis on income generating projects." The Minister also added that it was humbling to the government of Eswatini to witness Their Majesties identifying and fully supporting poverty alleviation initiatives in the country. "It is also within the Government's vision to pursue expansion into other project areas, which are a priority need for improving the socio-economic lives of rural communities," further said the Minister. He also urged the Macudvulwini Multipurpose Cooperative to adhere to professional business ethics and seed part of the profit in business growth as they received the bus. Ngwempisi Member of Parliament (MP) Bishop Bhekibandla Vilakati applauded



▲ Minister Sikhumbuzo Dlamini, PS Nonhlanhla Dlamini, MP Bhekibandla Vilakati and other officials posing for a group photo after the handover.



▲ The E2.1 Million bus handed over to Macudvulwini Multipurpose Cooperative through RDF.

the Ministry for the delivery of the bus and other projects within the constituency. Vilakati advised the recipients of the bus to take extra care of the bus and work towards

developing the constituency. The fund is a government initiative under the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development which was founded

to promote rural and regional development through the Regional Development Fund (RDF) which is managed by the Micro Projects Unit and the ministry. It was established by the government of Eswatini and is regulated under the Act 2015 which stipulates that the fund is monitored by parliament through the Regional Development Fund Committee and the Regional Development Technical Fund. The Regional Development Technical Fund committee helps the RDF committee which are the legislators (MPs). Further, the fund focuses on infrastructure development, improvements, service delivery, and intensive projects. There is no minimum or maximum allocation as funds depend on the project and available allocated funds in that constituency. The portfolio is also responsible for focusing on socio-economic development through proper regional development planning and coordination, empowerment, and mobilisation of people at the local level. The programme was established to bring about sound, comprehensive, balanced, and integrated regional development and coordination.

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Taiwan brings healthcare, warmth to Nkhaba residents

Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala

THE Taiwan Embassy and Medical Mission (ICDF), led by Minister Ching-Lin Tsuei, made a heartwarming visit to Nkhaba in the Hhohho Region. Their mission was to provide much-needed health services to the local community. The residents of Nkhaba welcomed the Taiwanese team with open arms, with an impressive 656 people seeking treatment during the outreach program. The dedicated medical team provided a comprehensive range of services, including addressing various health concerns and offering expert medical advice.

The Taiwan team further ensured that patients received the necessary medication to manage their health conditions, Ultra-sonic tests and cancer screening where they looked at early detection and diagnosis. The Taiwanese further promoted preventative healthcare and raised awareness, empowering the community with knowledge about daily healthcare practices.

Adding a delightful touch to the outreach, the Taiwan-Africa Vegetable Initiative (TAVI) served fresh vegetarian dishes. This initiative not only provided nourishment

but also showcased the value of traditional vegetables in promoting a healthy and balanced diet.

Nkhaba Member of Parliament, Hopewell Shiba, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Taiwanese team for their remarkable efforts. He further highlighted the impact of their generosity, mentioning the additional donation of rice, which brought immense relief to residents facing challenges in accessing healthcare.

As the Lunar New Year approaches, Taiwanese doctors and nurses go above and beyond, demonstrating their commitment to improving the health and well-being of the Eswatini community. Minister Tsuei emphasized that their tireless efforts represent the sincerest form of New Year wishes for all Emaswati – a wish for a healthier and happier future.

This heartwarming initiative signifies the strong bond between Taiwan and Eswatini, built on the foundation of compassion, collaboration, and a shared commitment to healthcare for all. The Taiwan ICDF activities focus on four core areas of operations which are; lending and investment, technical cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and international education and training. Each of these areas of operation is represented by a department within the organization.



▲ Nkhaba MP Hopewell Shiba, Minister Ching-Lin Tsuei, Taiwan Medical Mission posing with some emaSwati during the outreach at Nkhaba. Inset: EmaSwati came in numbers to receive the free treatment offered by Eswatini's best friend; Taiwan.

DPM opens new primary school in Maphiveni

DEPUTY Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, accompanied by the Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo, officially opened a new primary school at Maphiveni on Monday, bringing joy and opportunity to children who previously faced long distances and challenging circumstances to access education.

The school, located in a renovated building repurposed into spacious classrooms, has accommodated 48 Grade 1 pupils, many of whom are considered vulnerable and previously lacked birth certificates. The Deputy Prime Minister urged the school to admit more children even up to 100. This milestone marks the

... urges school to admit more children

culmination of a collaborative effort between the government, UNICEF, and UNFPA, driven by the Deputy Prime Minister's unwavering commitment to education.

Roots

The project's roots lie in the Deputy Prime Minister's visit to Maphiveni last year, where she discovered the harsh reality faced by children who had to travel a staggering 35 kilometres to reach the nearest school.

This arduous journey, coupled with the lack of proper documentation, forced many children to abandon their education altogether. Deeply moved by their plight, the

Deputy Prime Minister championed the cause of establishing a school in Maphiveni, igniting a vision that transformed into reality.

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office, recognizing the urgent need for the school, joined forces with UNICEF and UNFPA, leveraging their expertise and resources to make the project a reality.

The swift action, with renovations commenced on January 10th, demonstrated the collective commitment to ensuring every child has access to quality education as now 48 have begun the grade one lesson in the school.



▲ The newly opened Maphiveni school which currently has 48 grade 1 pupils.



▲ DPM Thulisile Dladla talking to Gogo Mkhabela at Msahweni where she commissioned the construction of her new house

DPM doubles down on elderly care, to build second house in Msahweni

ON a day dedicated to vulnerable citizens, the Deputy Prime Minister embarked on a mission of care and action, visiting Msahweni and KuMavula in the Hhohho Region.

Accompanied by the Minister for Education and Training, Owen Nxumalo, she addressed pressing needs for both the young and the elderly.

The journey began in Msahweni, where the Deputy Prime Minister officially commenced the construction of a house for Gogo Mkhabela, an elderly citizen identified as one of the most vulnerable in the area. This initiative exemplifies the government's commitment to ensuring the well-being of its senior citizens, providing them with safe and dignified living conditions. Witnessing the groundbreaking ceremony, residents expressed their gratitude for the interven-

tion, recognizing the positive impact it will have on Gogo Mkhabela's life.

Continuing her mission of care, the Deputy Prime Minister proceeded to KuMavula, where she conducted welfare checks on three vulnerable elderly residents. This is the second house the Deputy Prime Minister has committed herself to assist build.

Weeks ago, the Deputy Prime Minister made a generous pledge to Gogo Beauty Masuku, a 90-year-old resident of Lavumisa kaShabangu eMsuzaneni under Somntongo Inkhundla that she will facilitate and build her a house.

At Somntongo, the Deputy Prime Minister asserted that she encountered Gogo Masuku living in a dilapidated dwelling. Touched by the elderly woman's circumstances, Dladla made a personal commitment to have a new house built for her.

Coal production rose by 32% in 2022/23

Stories By Bahle Gama
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COAL production in the country increased by 32.5 per cent to 215,581 metric tonnes in the 2022/23 period.

According to the 2023 Company Survey Report prepared by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development in collaboration with the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE), this was courtesy of mining licences granted during the period.

Coal is classified under mining activities such as gold and other minerals as well as quarrying activities.

According to the report, the coal mine continued to import run of mine (ROM) from South Africa

which is high-yield blended with low-yield coal to improve the overall yields of the mine.

In 2022 yields improved from 50 to 60 per cent contributing to the observed growth in volumes and the advent of the Russia-Ukraine conflict resulted in higher demand for anthracite coal.

Meanwhile, quarried stone production dropped by 28.6 per cent to record 184,266 cubic metres in 2022 down from 257,871 the previous year. This reportedly indicated a slowdown in quarry-demanding construction projects during the year under review.

The subdued performance in quarried stone production is reported to have stemmed from the completion of several public sector projects with a low replacement ratio. On the positive, the ongoing Nhlangano-Sicunusa road upgrade contributed

to the quarry stone volumes recorded during the period under review.

The report further stated that the medium-term outlook for the mining sector is positive, benefiting from good prospects under coal and quarried stone production.

“The extension of the existing licenses together with the issuing of new mining rights for anthracite in 2023 is expected to accelerate coal volumes,” reads the report.

66
The extension of the existing licenses together with the issuing of new mining rights for anthracite in 2023 is expected to accelerate coal volumes

99



▲ Coal is classified under mining activities such as gold and other minerals as well as quarrying activities.

Electricity generation up by 23.5%

THE total electricity generated, both hydro and solar grew by 23.5 per cent in the 202/23 period.

This was a record of 373.9 GWh from 302.8 GWh in 2021/22.

The report states that hydropower increased by 24.8 per cent with 352.5 GWh benefitting from good rains that supported generation for longer periods.

Solar generation, on the other hand, grew by a slower 4.7 per cent to record 21.4 GWh during the same period.

“In line with the good performance of local power generation, total imports for the review period declined by 7.4 per cent to 853.7 GWh from 920.6 GWh in the previous period. Electricity consumption grew by a marginal 0.5 per cent to 1,129.4 GWh in the review period, from 1,123.6 GWh in the previous year,” reads the report.

According to the report, on account of a slower increase in sales coupled with a bigger increase in production, the country imported approximately 75 per cent of its

power in total, with a bulk sourced from SA and the difference from Mozambique.

Therefore, prospects for the energy subsector remain relatively positive, in line with electricity generation projects earmarked for the short to medium term. Approximately 50 MW is planned for hydropower, 40 MW biomass, and a staggering 300 MW for thermal.

Meanwhile, treated water consumption is reported to have fallen by 9.1 per cent to a record 12.88 million kilolitres compared to 14.16 million kilolitres in the previous period.

The decrease was observed both in commercial and household categories.

The report states that in the medium term, the subsector is expected to continue with the implementation of projects targeted at increased access to potable water.

Some of these projects will include the ongoing Ezulwini water project, and new projects such as Lomahasha – Namaacha, Manzini Water Supply (Lot 1 and 2), and Shiselweni project.



▲ Electricity consumption grew by a marginal 0.5 per cent to 1,129.4 GWh in the review period, from 1,123.6 GWh in the previous year

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Stories By Nokunceda Magagula
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IN the ongoing ATM bombing case, the defence counsel, Sivesonkhe Ngwenya of Sivesonkhe Attorneys, discredited the scene of the crime officer by stating that his qualifications for the job are fake.

This statement was made immediately after the officer had testified as a crown witness in court.

Ngwenya said this during the trial of the suspects including three South African nationals, Sicelo Msibi, Muziwandile Lukhele, and Given Mavuso, along with one Swati citizen, Lindani Zitha. The suspects are facing 17 charges, including robbery, malicious damage to property, and kidnapping, among others.

The alleged acts committed by these men are said to have resulted in the theft of over E2 million and malicious damage to property. It is worth noting that the 17 charges also include the use of explosives to bomb the FNB and Standard Bank ATMs located in the Mbabane Industrial Site, resulting in property damage amounting to E785,000. The accused were apprehended by the police on August 21, 2022.

Testified

Ngwenya's statement came after the scene of the crime officer, Detective Constable Nimrod Motsa, who is stationed at the Hhohho police headquarters, testified regarding the matter. Motsa stated that on August 6, 2022, at around 4 a.m, he received a call from his superiors about a suspected bomb explosion at the Gwamile Street Superspar in Mbabane.

He explained that he, along with other police officers, immediately proceeded to the scene. Upon arrival, they took random pictures of the crime scene while waiting for the bomb technicians to assess the situation

ATM bombing case:
Defence counsel discredits
police officer's qualification



▲The alleged ATM bombers during their court appearance.

and ensure that it was safe for further examination.

Motsa testified that he then took pictures of the damaged ATM, which he presented to the court. He explained that everything, including the ATM slot and walls, were damaged. Additionally, Motsa mentioned that the African building adjacent to the Superspar had also sustained cracks.

On the 19th of the same month, August 19, 2022, Motsa received another call from his superiors regarding a suspected bomb explosion at the Industrial Site in Mbabane. They promptly went to assess the situation and took photographs. Motsa stated that there were money notes scattered all over

the floor, some of which were mutilated. The unharmed money, which was nearly packed, was counted and amounted to E255,110.

During the court proceedings, Motsa presented the collected money as evidence.

Sengcabaphi Dlamini, a Standard Bank employee and branch operations team leader, was present in court to count the money using a note counter to verify the amount of E255,110, as claimed by Motsa. However, after counting the notes, the court discovered an excess of E10,000. The Standard Bank employee explained that they did not count the E10 notes due to damage, as the note counter was unable to read them.

Following the count, Motsa provided the



▲Money which was collected by the police in the blue bag and the notes counter used in court during the trial.

court with his qualifications as evidence of his expertise in assessing crime scenes.

It was at this moment that Ngwenya took the opportunity to discredit Motsa, stating that his qualifications were fake since he only possessed copies and could not produce the originals. Ngwenya further asserted that the witness had lied to the court regarding the amount of undamaged money notes, claiming it was E255,110 when it was actually E10,000 more.

"The court must take note that you do not possess the qualifications, which is why you resorted to buying copies. As a result, you are not a credible witness in this court," Ngwenya declared.

Driver arrested for knocking down 13-year-old

A kombi driver, Thokozani Thulani Mamba (48), has been arrested after knocking down a 13-year-old pedestrian who sustained minor injuries.

Mamba appeared at the Mbabane Magistrates Court before Senior Magistrate Sifiso Vilakati, for negligent driving. The accused was charged with contravening Section 89 (1) as read with Section 122 (7) of the Road Traffic Act 6 of 2007.

According to the charge sheet, the accident occurred on January 15, 2024 at about 7 a.m near Solani in the Hhohho region, whereby the accused, driving a Mazda Demio sedan, wrongfully, unlawfully, and negligently knocked down the pedestrian, a pupil residing at Masakhane while driving along Jwekwa Street.

"The pedestrian sustained an injury to her left foot, received treatment, and was discharged from Mbabane Government Hospital. By doing so, the accused contravened the aforementioned Act," read a portion of the charge sheet.

The charge sheet further states that the accused failed to drive with due attention, to apply brakes in a timely manner, and to avoid an accident that a reasonable driver would have avoided.

Mamba pleaded guilty to the charge and was found guilty as per his own plea.

In his mitigation statement, he explained that the teenager was rushing to board a parked kombi on the other side of the road and failed to check for incoming cars, which led to the accident. He pleaded with the court to be lenient in handing down the sentence, as he was a first-time offender and deeply re-

morseful for his actions. Consequently, he was sentenced to five months' imprisonment with an option of a fine of E500.

Meanwhile, in a separate case before the same court, Cebisile Mdlovu of Ngwenya village was also charged with negligent driving after she rear-ended a Ford Ranger LDV registered to Gil Gino Venando. According to the charge sheet, the accident occurred on Sozisa Road in Mbabane.

The accident occurred on January 18, 2024 at 12:45 pm near NTT in Mbabane, wherein the accused who was driving a Chevrolet Spark sedan collided with the rear of the Ford Ranger LDV.

The accused pleaded guilty to the offence. In her mitigation statement, she explained that she had purchased the car just three days prior and was unaware of the brake issues it had.

"I humbly plead with the court to be lenient in handing down the sentence, as I still need to compensate for the damages to the complainant's car," the accused said.

Vilakati postponed the sentencing to February 30, 2024, where the accused will provide proof of compensation to the complainant.



▲Kombi driver, Thokozani Thulani Mamba.

Two charged with theft of metals worth E30,500

TWO men have been charged with theft for allegedly stealing steel metals valued at E30,500, belonging to former Mbabane Swallows player Cosmos "Wall of Death" Mthethwa.

The men have been identified as Jeffery Madoda from Lamgabhi and Sibusiso Dlamini from Mbabane. Both accused individuals appeared in the Mbabane Magistrate's Court before Senior Magistrate Sifiso Vilakati.

According to their charge sheet, on February 2, 2024, at or near the Elangeni area in the Hhohho district, the accused acted jointly in furtherance of a common purpose, wrongfully, unlawfully, and intentionally stole metals valued at E30,500.00. These metals were the property in lawful possession of Mthethwa.

During the court proceedings, the prosecution requested that both accused individuals be remanded into custody until the trial date, which was set for February 16, 2023. The prosecution did not oppose bail and they each moved an application.

Madoda informed the court that he should be granted bail because he has two minor children who are solely dependent on him. He added that if granted bail, he would not interfere with the crown witness and would surrender his passport to the nearest police station.

On the other hand, Dlamini stated that he is a Swati citizen and does not have relatives in neighboring countries. He mentioned that he has three children whom he takes care of. Dlamini emphasized that he would not interfere with the crown witnesses or



▲The two men who have been charged with theft of steel metals worth E30,500.

evidence.

Both accused were remanded into custody until February 2, 2024 pending setting of his trial date.

BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Phase II of airborne survey begins

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, through the Geological Survey Department, has embarked on the second phase (Phase II) of its airborne geophysical survey of the Shiselweni and Lubombo regions. This initiative, aimed at boosting the economy and creating jobs, seeks to identify and prioritize potential mineral deposits in these areas.

Takeover panel reviewing Canal Plus buyout attempt

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's takeover panel said on Tuesday it was looking into MultiChoice Group and Vivendi's Canal Plus, after MultiChoice ended potential buyout talks with its top shareholder Canal Plus on February 5. Canal Plus, a top shareholder in MultiChoice, had on Thursday offered 105 rand (\$5.52) per share for every MultiChoice share it does not already own. It said the offer - worth 31.7 billion rand according to Reuters calculations - was a 40 per cent premium to MultiChoice's closing share price of 75 rand on Jan. 31.

Rand regains ground against strong dollar

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's rand was slightly stronger in early trade on Tuesday, as the U.S. dollar slipped from an 11-week high reached the previous day on lowered expectations of an early interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve. At 0620 GMT, the rand traded at 19.000 against the dollar, about 0.4 per cent stronger than Monday's close.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.5550	19.0192
G.B. Pound	23.2130	23.8970
EURO	19.8927	20.5014
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	

Positive outlook for maize production in 2023/24

By Bahle Gama

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DESPITE the 2022/23 growing season being very challenging for crop production in the country, the 2023/24 outlook for maize production is positive.

This is disclosed in the 2023 Company Survey report which is annually prepared by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development in collaboration with the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE).

With the government-sanctioned commercial maize project expected to contribute positively towards output, the outlook for maize production will therefore be positive.

This project is reportedly envisaged to add approximately 3,000 hectares of land annually to maize production, and commercial farmers have been identified in different parts of the country to participate in this project.

The input subsidy program is targeting 12,250 beneficiaries for the 2023/24 season.

However, this is not anticipated to translate to increases in production volumes since the enrolment criteria will revert to the initial one hectare per beneficiary unlike the previous year, where it was capped at three hectares per beneficiary.

In the 2022/23 growing season, maize was affected because the season was plagued with a plethora of challenges that proved detrimental



▲ A woman harvests green maize in this undated picture.

to its harvest period.

According to the report, a combination of high input costs, induced by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, coupled with a heat wave at a critical flowering stage resulted in a fall in total maize production.

This resulted in maize output declining by 33.1 per cent, from a high record of 127,315 metric tonnes (MT) recorded in 2021/22 to 85,201 MT in the 2022/23 season. The national average maize yield also fell by 29.8 percent from 1.70 to 1.19 tonnes per hectare between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The area planted also declined by 4.7 percent from 74,799 hectares in the 2021/22 season to 71,305 hectares in the 2022/23 season due to agricultural input price hikes, which resulted in disinvestment for some maize producers.

In line with the total area planted, the total tractor hours also declined by 3.4 per cent from 78,757 hours in 2021/22 to 75,739 hours in the reporting period. In terms of the input subsidy program, the government increased its financial contribution from 50 to 65 per cent to cushion farmers from the effects of price hikes.

Despite the efforts made by the government, the number of farmers that registered for the input subsidy program in the 2022/23 season reportedly fell by 30.6 percent, from 15,049 beneficiaries in the previous season to 11,519.

The report further states that a total area of 97 hectares was planted in the winter cropping program with an estimated output of 2.20 tonnes per hectare in the season. A large portion of the area planted under the winter cropping project was at Balekani and Buseleni.

Eswatini businesses get a boost to untapped EU market potential

By Neaba Ntshakala

THE European Union (EU) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) have joined forces with Business Support Organizations (BSOs) in Eswatini to unlock the hidden potential of the Southern African Development Community-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (SADC-EU EPA) for local businesses.

While the EU market presents a vast opportunity for Eswatini's exporters, a recent study by the ITC revealed a major obstacle which is a lack of awareness and understanding of trade regulations.

Notably, four out of five businesses in Eswatini remain unaware of the SADC-EU EPA, hindering their ability to access preferential market access and comply with origin rules.

Recognizing this challenge, the ITC, under the EU-funded "Eswatini: Promoting growth through competitive alliances II" program, conducted a five-day training program for BSO members.

This initiative is aimed to equip them with the knowledge and tools to effectively advise local companies on identifying promising trade opportunities in the EU market, navigating the intricate world of origin criteria to qualify for preferential access, and leveraging online tools and resources for market and regulations information.



▲ EmaSwati who participated in the EU, ITC and BSO to unlock the hidden potential of the Southern African Development Community-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement.

This training marks the third in a series, following sessions on export fact sheet preparation and utilizing the SADC-EU EPA with ITC tools.

Head of Cooperation for the EU Delegation in Eswatini, Eva-Maria Engdahl, emphasized the importance of closer economic integration between Eswatini and the EU.

"The EU is proud to partner with the ITC to empower businesses to exploit this trade opportunity," she stated, highlighting the commitment to supporting MSMEs in integrating into global value chains and meeting EU standards.

Sibusiso Mnisi, Manager-External Trade at the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA), acknowledged the low utilization of the agreement despite its 2018 signing. "We must work together to equip our businesses to benefit from this opportunity and understand the requirements, especially the origin rules," he declared.

This initiative aligns with the overall objective

of the "Eswatini: Promoting growth through competitive alliances" program - fostering job creation and export-led growth for small businesses.

By empowering BSOs to guide local companies, the program unlocks the true potential of the SADC-EU EPA, paving the way for increased trade, economic growth, and reduced unemployment and poverty in Eswatini.

The International Trade Centre is focused on topics with the greatest potential to achieve the UN global goals of increased prosperity, inclusiveness, and sustainability in developing countries, especially the least developed countries. To respond to trade development environment priorities and to maximize the contribution of MSME competitiveness to inclusion, sustainability and prosperity, ITC work focuses on five impact areas fully exploiting its technical expertise in four core services, and blending this expertise with specific tools and approaches.

Phase II of airborne survey begins

By Ncaba Ntshakala

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, through the Geological Survey Department, has embarked on the second phase (Phase II) of its airborne geophysical survey of the Shiselweni and Lubombo regions.

This initiative, aimed at boosting the economy and creating jobs, seeks to identify and prioritize potential mineral deposits in these areas.

New Resolution Geophysics, the contracted company, recently conducted a demonstration for the Ministry and the Minerals Management Board (MMB), showcasing how the survey utilizes helicopters to collect high-resolution geophysical data.

The project, officially launched in November 2023 by the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Prince Lonkhokhela, builds upon the success of the first phase (Phase I), which identified promising deposits of diamonds, iron ore, gold, and copper-nickel-platinum group elements in the Hhohho and Manzini regions.

Present during the demonstration were the Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry, Dorcas Dlamini, members of the Mineral and Mining Board led by its Chairperson Prince Guduza, and Ministerial officials.

The ultimate objective of the project is to attract emaSwati into the mining sector



▲A helicopter doing the survey. (Inset)Minerals and Mining Board Chairperson Prince Guduza, PS Dorcas Dlamini and officials posing for a group photo.



and foreign direct investment and create job opportunities. Phase one of the Multi-Disciplinary Geoscience Mapping in the Hhohho and Manzini regions successfully identified diamond, iron ore, gold, and copper-nickel-platinum group elements.

The Ministry has asserted that this phase will complete the multi-disciplinary

geoscience-mapping project of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

The Kingdom of Eswatini recognises the importance of geoscience in economic development. Hence the Geological Survey Department (GSD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, in collaboration with the Council for Geoscience (CGS) of

South Africa, commissioned the survey in 2021 aiming to map mineral potential and groundwater resources, among other things.

For this purpose, investment has been made in the collection of high-resolution geophysical data that will initially cover the north-western sector of the country.



MALOMACOLLIERY LIMITED VACANCY- FITTER ARTISAN

Maloma Colliery Ltd is a Swati coal Mine operation located in the Shiselweni and Lubombo region of Eswatini. Maloma Colliery Ltd mainly produces anthracite coal products for the Metallurgical market. Maloma invites experienced and well-qualified individuals to fill the position of **Fitter Artisan**, position reports to the **Workshop Foreman**.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Repair and maintain plant and machinery in a serviceable state.
- To control downtime by carrying out preventive maintenance and monitor compliance.
- Analyzing the blueprints for mechanical systems to determine the specifications of the components to be constructed.
- Contribute to team effort by engaging in shift work and accomplishing related tasks as needed.
- Inspecting fabricated components to ensure that they are the correct size.
- Creating a suitable maintenance schedule and performing system maintenance accordingly.
- Conducting diagnostic testing on malfunctioning systems to determine the root cause of the malfunction.
- Replacing damaged or defective structural components as needed.
- Adhering to all work-site safety rules and regulations

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION

- N6 or equivalent in Mechanical Fitting.
- Must have completed apprenticeship.
- Trade Test Certificate.

COMPETENCIES, EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

- Exhibits our company values.
- Good Communication Skills, Sound Business Knowledge
- Ability to demonstrate Health and Safety practices.
- Willingness to work as a committed team member with a flexible and cooperative attitude.
- Ability to conform to shifting or changing priorities.
- The ability to concentrate for extended periods.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

Applicants with required qualifications accompanied by reference letters must send their CV's to recruitment@maloma.sz not later than the 9th February 2024. Alternatively submitted to the People and Culture Department.

Applications should be labelled the position applied for. If you have not heard from us by 16th February 2024, consider your application unsuccessful.



MALOMA COLLIERY LIMITED VACANCY- SECTION MINER X2

Maloma Colliery Ltd is a Swati coal Mine operation located in the Shiselweni and Lubombo region of Eswatini. Maloma Colliery Ltd mainly produces anthracite coal products for the Metallurgical market. Maloma invites experienced and well-qualified individuals to fill the position of **Section Miner**, position reports to the **Shift Boss**.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Operate mining equipment, drilling, blasting and excavation.
- Set up and operate drilling machines to create specific patterns for blasting holes.
- Load and detonate explosives to produce desired blasting patterns in underground mines.
- Install rock bolts using machinery to stabilize rock excavations.
- Perform Inspection and maintenance of mining equipment and machinery.
- To ensure that the section is appropriately manned, employees are trained, developed and disciplined to achieve expected outcomes.
- Ensure compliance with service, Health and Safety policies standards and procedures, through examinations and inspections of places underground as per legal requirements.
- To ensure effective communication is established and maintained.
- To ensure optimal service standards within areas of responsibility are achieved.
- To plan daily activities.
- Comply with all necessary explosive regulations and standards.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION

- Level or appropriate mining experience with basic literacy and numeracy.
- Medical Certificate of Fitness
- Gas Testing Certificate
- English Proficiency
- Eswatini Blasting Certificate
- Current and previous mining experience is advantageous.

COMPETENCIES, EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

Good Communication Skills, Sound Business Knowledge

- Exhibits our company values.
- Effective Communications in English (Written and Spoken)
- A minimum of 4 years' experience working underground.

Applicants with required qualifications accompanied by reference letters must send their CV's to recruitment@maloma.sz not later than the 9th February 2024. Alternatively submitted to the People and Culture Department.

Applications should be labelled the position applied for. If you have not heard from us by 16th February 2024, consider your application unsuccessful.

S.Africa’s takeover panel reviewing Canal Plus’ attempt to buyout MultiChoice

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa’s takeover panel said on Tuesday it was looking into MultiChoice Group and Vivendi’s Canal Plus, after MultiChoice ended potential buyout talks with its top shareholder Canal Plus on February 5.

Canal Plus, a top shareholder in MultiChoice, had on Thursday offered 105 rand (\$5.52) per share for every MultiChoice share it does not already own. It said the offer - worth 31.7 billion rand according to Reuters calculations - was a 40 per cent premium to MultiChoice’s closing share price of 75 rand on Jan. 31.

The offer price was rejected by the continent’s biggest pay TV company, saying it significantly undervalued the group. MultiChoice said, however, it is open to talk to anyone about any deal so long as it is at a fair price.

Possibly anticipating a push back, Canal Plus, which as of Thursday held a 31.67 per cent stake in MultiChoice, raised its stake to 35.01 per cent following the deal’s announcement last week, just above the threshold that would require the company to make a mandatory offer to shareholders.

MultiChoice said on Monday it had



▲A MultiChoice logo is displayed outside the company’s building in Cape Town, South Africa.

requested the Takeover Regulation Panel to make a ruling as to whether a mandatory offer must be made.

“At the time of releasing this statement, the Panel is still engaging with MultiChoice and Canal+ to provide guidance and guidelines on how the matter is to be handled and addressed,” The Takeover Regulation Panel said in a statement.

It added that it was investigating various aspects of the current status of the matter.

The French media group was not immediately available to comment.

Shares in MultiChoice have jumped more than 20 per cent since the offer was made, but it is still trading below the offer price, indicating a lack of investor confidence that the deal would go through. (Reuters)

Rand regains some ground against strong dollar

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa’s rand was slightly stronger in early trade on Tuesday, as the U.S. dollar slipped from an 11-week high reached the previous day on lowered expectations of an early interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve.

At 0620 GMT, the rand traded at 19.000 against the dollar , about 0.4 per cent stronger than Monday’s close.

The dollar index was down 0.124 per cent at 104.33. It touched 104.60 in the last session, its highest since Nov. 14, as traders slashed bets that the Fed would aggressively cut rates this year.

There was little positive news at home to boost the rand, analysts said.

Investors will be looking toward President Cyril Ramaphosa’s State of the Nation Address (SONA) later this week to see what solutions are proposed to fix South Africa’s power crisis and rail and port problems, which have strangled growth in Africa’s most industrialised economy.

“An extended surge in the U.S. dollar may have driven some of the (rand’s) weakness, but SA has done itself no favours and will not stand out as a currency to buy unless the state takes dramatic reform action,” ETM Analytics said in a research note.

South Africa’s benchmark 2030 government bond was stronger in early deals, with the yield down 2.5 basis points to 9.845 per cent. (Reuters)



MALOMACOLLIERY LIMITED

VACANCY- SHIFT BOSS X2

Maloma Colliery Ltd is a Swati coal Mine operation located in the Shiselweni and Lubombo region of Eswatini. Maloma Colliery Ltd mainly produces anthracite coal products for the Metallurgical market. Maloma invites experienced and well-qualified individuals to fill the position of **Shift Boss**, position reports to the **Mine Overseer**.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Coordinating and monitoring development mining activities to ensure adherence to mine standards and operational targets.
- Planning of all development mining activities in accordance with mining and other schedules and allocating resources as required.
- Coordinating shift hand over by checking relevant documentation, the required physical mining activities, and available resources, and communicating these to team members of the development mining crew.
- All duties as per Mine Health and Safety Act.
- Performing identified administrative duties according to legal and procedural requirements.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION

- Grade 12 / N3 / Equivalent NQF Level 4 qualification
- Mining Engineering Degree will be advantageous
- Underground Shift Boss certificate
- A Supervisory qualification would be advantageous.
- Medical Certificate of Fitness
- Gas Testing Certificate
- Eswatini Blasting Certificate

COMPETENCIES, EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

- Exhibits our company values.
- Good Communication Skills. Sound Business Knowledge
- Effective Communications in English (Written and Spoken)
- Computer Literacy(MS Office)
- Minimum of 4 years’ experience as a miner
- Knowledge and experience of Underground mining practices and related operations environment.
- Safety, Health and Environmental Legislation and standards applicable to underground mining.

Applicants with required qualifications accompanied by reference letters must send their CV’s to recruitment@maloma.sz not later than the 9th February 2024. Alternatively submitted to the People and Culture Department.

Applications should be labelled the position applied for. If you have not heard from us by 16th February 2024, consider your application unsuccessful.



MALOMACOLLIERY LIMITED

VACANCY- SHERQ MANAGER

Maloma Colliery Ltd is a Swati coal Mine operation located in the Shiselweni and Lubombo region of Eswatini. Maloma Colliery Ltd mainly produces anthracite coal products for the Metallurgical market. Maloma invites experienced and well-qualified individuals to fill the position of **SHERQ MANAGER**, position reports to the **CEO**.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Develop actionable business strategies and plans that ensure alignment with short-term and long-term objectives developed in tandem with the CEO.
- Develop and implement safety policies and procedures for underground mining operations.
- Conduct regular safety inspections and audits to ensure compliance with regulatory standards.
- Provide safety training and guidance to all personnel working in underground mining environments.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop and implement environmental management programs to mitigate the impact of mining operations on the environment.
- Investigate accidents and near miss incidents and make recommendations for improvement.
- Collaborate with management to create a culture of safety awareness and accountability.
- Prepare a monthly status report for the CEO on internal audit findings to track the status of corrective action for all reported internal audit findings.
- Stay abreast of industry trends, regulatory changes, and international best practices related to SHERQ management in the mining sector.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION

- Degree in Occupational Health and Safety, Mining Engineering or related Field.
- 5-10 Years’ experience in safety, health, environment, risk and quality management within the mining sector.
- Certified Safety Professional (CSP), Certified Mine Safety Professional (CMSP) or equivalent certifications.

COMPETENCIES, EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

- Exhibits our company values.
- Strong Communication Skills. Sound Business Knowledge
- Effective Communications in English (Written and Spoken)
- Computer Literacy (MS Office)
- Knowledge and experience of Underground mining practices and related operations environment.
- Safety, Health and Environmental Legislation and standards applicable to underground mining.

Applicants with required qualifications accompanied by reference letters must send their CV’s to recruitment@maloma.sz not later than the 9th February 2024. Alternatively submitted to the People and Culture Department.

Applications should be labelled the position applied for. If you have not heard from us by 31st January 2024, consider your application unsuccessful.

Bluesky now open for anyone to join

AFTER almost a year as an invite-only app, Bluesky is now open to the public. Funded by Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey, Bluesky is one of the more promising micro-blogging platforms that could provide an alternative to Elon Musk’s X. Before opening to the public, the platform had about 3 million sign-ups. Now that anyone can join, the young platform faces a challenge: how can it meaningfully stand up to Threads’ 130 million monthly active users, or even Mastodon’s 1.8 million?

Bluesky looks and functions like Twitter at the outset, but the platform stands out because of what lies under the hood. The company began as a project inside of Twitter that sought to build a decentralized infrastructure called the AT Protocol for social networking. As a decentralized platform, Bluesky’s code is completely open source, which gives people outside of the company transparency into what is being built and how. Developers can even write their own code on top of the AT Protocol, so they can create anything from a custom algorithm to an entirely new social platform.



▲Bluesky looks and functions like Twitter at the outset, but the platform stands out because of what lies under the hood.

“What decentralization gets you is the ability to try multiple things in parallel, and so you’re not bottlenecking change on one organization,” Bluesky CEO Jay Graber told TechCrunch. “The way we built Bluesky actually lets anyone insert a change into the product.” This setup gives users more agency to control and curate their social media experience. On a centralized platform like Instagram, for example, users have revolted against algorithm changes that they dislike, but there’s not much they can do to revert or improve upon an undesired

app update. The literal elephant in the room is Mastodon, the open source, decentralized social network that’s been around since 2016, years before Bluesky existed. While the platforms share similar goals, they use different protocols, making it difficult for the platforms to work together. While some communities have found a home on Mastodon, others have been deterred by the network’s confusing onboarding process and technical terminology. That’s where Bluesky’s strategy diverges. (TechCrunch)

Meta announces new updates to help teens on its platforms combat sextortion

META is introducing a few new updates and efforts to help teens on its platforms combat sextortion, the company announced on Tuesday. Most notably, Meta announced expanded availability of Take it Down, which is an online tool that it helps finance and is run by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). The company also updated its Sextortion hub with new guidance is launching a global campaign to raise awareness about sextortion. Take It Down is designed to prevent the spread of non-consensual intimate imagery, and is now available in 25 more languages after originally only launching in English and Spanish last year. It allows teens to take

back control of their personal intimate phones and prevents ex-partners and scammers from spreading them online. The system can be used by people under 18 who are worried their content has been or may be posted online. It can also be used by parents or trusted adults on behalf of a young person. Plus, it can be used by adults who are concerned about images taken of them when they were under 18. The system works by having users follow instructions to assign a unique hash, which is a digital fingerprint in the form of a numerical code, to their image or video privately from their own device. Once the hash has been submitted to NCMEC, Meta can find copies of the image or video and take them down. (TechCrunch)



▲Meta also updated its Sextortion hub with new guidance is launching a global campaign to raise awareness about sextortion.



MALOMACOLLIERY LIMITED VACANCY- ELECTRICAL ARTISAN

Maloma Colliery Ltd is a Swati coal Mine operation located in the Shiselweni and Lubombo region of Eswatini. Maloma Colliery Ltd mainly produces anthracite coal products for the Metallurgical market. Maloma invites experienced and well-qualified individuals to fill the position of **Electrical Artisan**, position reports to the **Electrical Foreman**.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Install, maintain, and repair electrical systems and equipment.
- Troubleshoot and diagnose electrical issues.
- Conduct preventative maintenance to ensure system reliability.
- Performing Flameproof corrective maintenance.
- Maintaining good knowledge of heating and air conditioning systems as well as various testing equipment.
- Collaborate with other team members to achieve operational goals.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION

- N4-N6 Electrical Engineering
- Completion of electrician apprenticeship.
- SASA/Merseta Trade test certificate.
- Flameproofing certificate will be an added advantage.
- Strong understanding of electrical systems and components
- Familiarity with mine-specific electrical systems is an advantage.
- Commitment to safety and adherence to regulations
- Strong problem-solving skills and attention to detail

COMPETENCIES, EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

- Exhibits our company values.
- Good Communication Skills. Sound Business Knowledge
- Proven experience in electrical maintenance and repair
- Effective Communications in English (Written and Spoken)
- Line work and HT system protection will be an added advantage.
- Deep electrical system, power generation, blueprints, maintenance, and repair knowledge.

Applicants with required qualifications accompanied by reference letters must send their CV's to **recruitment@maloma.sz** not later than the 9th February 2024. Alternatively submitted to the People and Culture Department.

Applications should be labelled the position applied for. If you have not heard from us by 16th February 2024, consider your application unsuccessful.



MALOMACOLLIERY LIMITED VACANCY- BOILERMAKER ARTISAN

Maloma Colliery Ltd is a Swati coal Mine operation located in the Shiselweni and Lubombo region of Eswatini. Maloma Colliery Ltd mainly produces anthracite coal products for the Metallurgical market. Maloma invites experienced and well-qualified individuals to fill the position of **Boilermaker Artisan**, position reports to the **Workshop Foreman**.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To ensure equipment maintenance and repair for surface and underground is done in compliance with procedures and standards.
- To carry out preventative maintenance work timeously and with integrity and report any deviations to Fabrication foreman for follow-up corrective work order.
- Attend to equipment related failures and breakdowns.
- Identify continuous improvement initiatives during plant inspection and report to the Foreman for implementation with a view to increase plant reliability and availability and safety.
- Immediate response to any breakdown or maintenance and ensure housekeeping is done after work completion.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION

- N4/N6 Mechanical engineering
- 5 year Apprenticeship program.
- Good mechanical aptitude

COMPETENCIES, EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

- Exhibits our company values.
- Good Communication Skills. Sound Business Knowledge
- 5 years post apprenticeship
- Effective Communications in English (Written and Spoken)
- Ability to read drawings and interpret them.

Applicants with required qualifications accompanied by reference letters must send their CV's to **recruitment@maloma.sz** not later than the 9th February 2024. Alternatively submitted to the People and Culture Department.

Applications should be labelled the position applied for. If you have not heard from us by 16th February 2024, consider your application unsuccessful.

Senegal parliament delays election until December 15

DAKAR - Senegal's parliament on Monday voted to hold a postponed presidential election on Dec. 15 in the face of public outcry that led some opposition lawmakers to blockade proceedings until security forces intervened.

The move follows President Macky Sall's unprecedented announcement of a postponement on Saturday that pitched the West African nation into uncharted constitutional waters and threatens to further tarnish its reputation as a bastion of democratic stability in a region swept by coups.

Riot police fired tear gas to disperse protests outside parliament as lawmakers discussed the bill that initially proposed re-scheduling the Feb. 25 vote to Aug. 25 and keeping Sall in power until his successor is installed.

Propose

By the evening, just before the final vote, the bill was amended to propose the even later election date of Dec. 15, but it was passed by 105 MPs in the 165-seat Assembly.

The last-minute amendment to postpone the election to December rather than August is likely to provoke further opposition backlash and risk a repeat of violent protests that have broken out over the past three years partly over Sall's alleged authoritarian overreach.

After hours of procedural discussions, lawmakers had been due to start the debate and vote on the bill, when around a dozen opposition members rushed the central dais and refused to leave, effectively halting parliamentary business.

More than two hours later, security forces moved them off the central area, allowing the vote to proceed.

"What you are doing is not democratic, it's not republican," said Guy Marius Sagna, who was one of several rebel MPs wearing a sash in the colours of the Senegalese flag.

TEAR GAS, ARRESTS

The postponement faced strong push-



▲ Senegal's parliament on Monday voted to hold a postponed presidential election on Dec. 15 in the face of public outcry that led some opposition lawmakers to blockade proceedings until security forces intervened.

back elsewhere on Monday. At least three of the 20 presidential candidates submitted legal challenges to the delay, Constitutional Council documents showed. Two more candidates have vowed to challenge it via the courts.

Confrontations

Around 100 people gathered outside parliament on Monday, after confrontations on Sunday, chanting "Macky Sall is a dictator". Police fired tear gas, chased them into side streets and made arrests.

Authorities temporarily restricted mobile internet access from Sunday night, citing hate messages on social media and threats to public order. Several schools sent pupils home early.

The private Walf television channel said it was taken off air on Sunday and had its licence revoked.

"Senegal has been known as a country with a strong democracy but this is no longer the case," one protester who only gave his first name, Dame, told Reuters. "The only thing we want is a fair election." He said he was worried Sall would cling on to power indefinitely.

The African Union and United States on Monday joined a chorus of calls from region-

al bodies and Western governments for a new election date to be set as soon as possible.

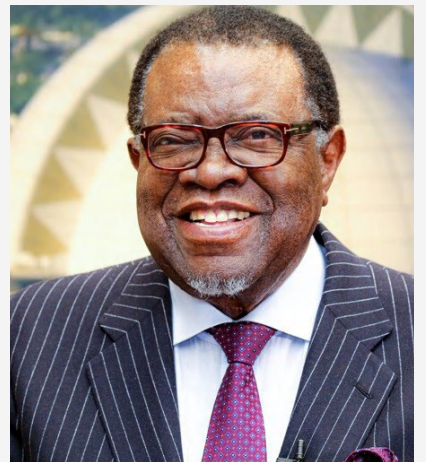
Ratings agency Moody's warned that any lengthy delay to the election could hamper the country's planned fiscal consolidation by making it harder to implement policies, including a promised phasing out of energy subsidies by 2025.

Senegal's sovereign dollar bonds fell sharply. The bond maturing in 2033 tumbled more than 4 cents on the dollar to 82.4 cents - its biggest one-day fall since the 2020 COVID-19 market rout - Tradeweb data showed.

Sall, who is not standing in the vote and has reached the constitutional limit of two terms in power, said he delayed the election due to a dispute over the candidate list and alleged corruption within the constitutional body that handled the list.

The opposition Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), whose candidate was barred from running because of dual nationality issues, supports the delay and proposed the postponement bill in parliament before Sall's announcement.

The bill passed due to backing by the ruling party and the opposition coalition, which includes PDS. (Reuters)



▲ Namibia's 14th president, Hage Geingob.

Namibians pay homage to late president

NAMIBIANS held a candlelit vigil in the capital, Windhoek, on Monday evening to pay homage to their late president, Hage Geingob. The much-respected leader, who was receiving treatment for cancer, passed away on Sunday at the age of 82.

One resident, Sidney Boois, said he wept when he heard the news, adding that that was the kind of relationship people had with Geingob.

"It was a personal relationship. But life is about the relationship and he related to people and he could connect with us as a nation, as people of this country," he said.

Geingob played a central role in what has become one of Africa's most stable democracies after returning from a long exile in Botswana and the United States as an anti-apartheid activist.

Tributes continued to pour in from around the world for the late president who was a soft-spoken man, but firm on advancing Africa's agenda as an important stakeholder in world affairs.

Geingob maintained close relations with the United States and other Western countries but, like many African leaders, also forged a warm relationship with China and other powers.

He could be outspoken on issues at home and abroad. In January, he criticised former colonial master, Germany, for supporting Israel after South Africa filed a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice accusing it of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

"Germany cannot morally express commitment to the United Nations convention against genocide, including atonement for the genocide in Namibia, whilst supporting the equivalent of a holocaust and genocide in Gaza," he said.

He was referring to events between 1904 and 1908 when colonial security forces killed tens of thousands of people in Namibia while putting down an uprising.

In 2021, Germany acknowledged that its actions amounted to genocide and pledged more than \$1 billion for infrastructure projects in the country.

Following Geingob's passing on Sunday, the southern African nation quickly swore in his deputy, Nangolo Mbumba, as acting president to complete what was his second and final term in office.

Elections are set for November. A government statement said Mbumba will lead Namibia until 21 March 2025, when the winner of the polls will take office. (Reuters)

Kenyan doomsday cult leader charged with murder of 191 children

NAIROBI - Kenyan cult leader Paul Mackenzie and 29 associates were charged on Tuesday with the murder of 191 children whose bodies were found among more than double that number buried in a forest.

The defendants all denied the charges brought before a court in the coastal town of Malindi. One suspect was found mentally unfit to stand trial.

Prosecutors say Mackenzie ordered his followers to starve themselves and their children to death so that they could go to heaven before the world ended, in one of the world's worst cult-related disasters in recent history.

The followers of his Good News International Church lived in several secluded settlements in an 800-acre area within the Shakahola forest. More

than 400 bodies were eventually exhumed.

Mackenzie was arrested last April. He has already been charged with terrorism-related crimes, manslaughter and torture. He was also convicted in December of producing and distributing films without a licence and sentenced to 12 months in jail.

A former taxi driver, Mackenzie forbade cult members from sending their children to school and from going to hospital when they were ill, branding such institutions as Satanic, some of his followers said.

Mackenzie's lawyer has said he is cooperating with the investigation into the deaths. The 30 defendants are due back in court on March 7 for a bond hearing, the judge said.

(Reuters)



▲ Kenyan cult leader Paul Mackenzie and 29 associates were charged on Tuesday with the murder of 191 children whose bodies were found among more than double that number buried in a forest.

LONDON - King Charles has been diagnosed with a form of cancer and will postpone public engagements to undergo treatment, Buckingham Palace said on Monday, but added he remained “wholly positive” about the scare less than 18 months into his reign.

Charles, 75, who became king in September 2022 following the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth, has begun a series of treatments, the palace said, adding he was looking forward to returning to fulltime duties as soon as possible.

The cancer revelation comes after Charles spent three nights in hospital last month where he underwent a corrective procedure for a benign enlarged prostate.

The palace said a separate issue of concern had been spotted during that hospital stay, but did not given any further details beyond saying tests had revealed the king had a “form of cancer”.

Prostate cancer

“No further details are being shared at this stage, except to confirm that his majesty does not have prostate cancer,” the palace said.

“Throughout this period, his majesty will continue to undertake State business and official paperwork as usual.”

As such, Charles will continue to have meetings with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, while his wife Queen Camilla will continue with her engagements.

On Sunday, the king gave no indication of the diagnosis when he was pictured smiling and waving to onlookers as he attended a church service with Camilla.

It was his first public outing

King Charles diagnosed with cancer, undergoes treatment

since he and his daughter-in-law Kate left the same London hospital a week ago where they had both undergone planned treatments.

Kate, the Princess of Wales and wife to heir to the British throne Prince William, spent two weeks at the London clinic following abdominal surgery for an unspecified but non-cancerous condition.

She will not be returning to royal duties until after Easter. William, who has been looking after their three children as she recovers, will carry out his first public engagement since her operation on Wednesday.

While the royals usually closely guard details of their health, regarding it as a private matter, Charles has been open about his recent treatment.

“His Majesty has chosen to share his diagnosis to prevent speculation and in the hope it may assist public understanding for all those around the world who are affected by cancer,” Buckingham Palace said.

Sunak sent his best wishes to the King on X. “I have no doubt he’ll be back to full strength in no time and I know the whole country will be wishing him well,” he said.

BIDEN CONCERN

The leaders of Australia and Canada, where Charles is also head of state, expressed their best wishes and hopes for the king to make a speedy recovery, while U.S. President Joe Biden said he was con-

cerned by the news and planned to call Charles later.

“Navigating a cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship takes hope and absolute courage,” Biden said. “Jill and I join the people of the United Kingdom in praying that His Majesty experiences a swift and full recovery.”

The monarch told his immediate family personally about his cancer diagnosis, and Prince Harry, his younger son, will travel to the UK to see him in the coming days, a source close to the Duke of Sussex said.

Stepped down

Harry now lives in California with his American wife Meghan and their two children after the couple stepped down from royal duties in 2020.

After waiting longer than any heir in British history to become king, Charles’ first year on the throne was dominated by his coronation - Britain’s biggest ceremonial event for generations, full of pomp and pageantry.

While before he became sovereign there were suggestions that the long-time environmental campaigner would bring a radical overhaul of the monarchy, Charles has generally followed in the style of his mother, while trying to add some of his own touches.

Polls suggest most Britons have a favourable view of his reign so far, although younger generations appear much less enthusiastic



▲ King Charles has been diagnosed with a form of cancer and will postpone public engagements to undergo treatment.

about the royal family in general.

Prior to his recent health issues, the biggest shadow over the royals was the ongoing fallout between his son Harry and the rest of his family, most notably Harry’s elder brother Prince William.

Ingrid Seward, editor-in-chief of Majesty Magazine, said that for Charles, a workaholic who of-

ten worked until midnight on his papers, his recent health issues would mean he would have to take it more slowly now.

“His body will tell him he has to, and Camilla certainly will,” she said. “I think he’s mentally exhausted since the death of the queen. It’s been non-stop for him since then.” (Reuters)

Ukraine’s leadership shake-up will not hit relations with allies

KYIV - Ukraine’s foreign minister said on Tuesday that a military and political shake-up that is expected soon will have no impact on Kyiv’s relations with its Western allies.

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said he is considering a “reset” to replace several senior officials that will go beyond the military sphere. There is intense speculation that Ukraine’s army chief will be fired.

“I do not think that any changes in the government can influence our relations with our partners,” Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba told a joint news briefing in Kyiv alongside his Portuguese counterpart.

He said it was the constitutional right of Zelenskiy to be able to dismiss the head of the army if he saw fit. Any shake-up would not be a sign of divisions in Ukraine’s war effort, he added.

“We can have discussions about tactics inside of the team but we are all united around our strategic goal which is the defeat of Russia in Ukraine and restoration of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. And there are no discussions whatsoever on this strategic goal,” he said. Speculation has gripped Ukraine for weeks over suggestions that the president was about to dis-



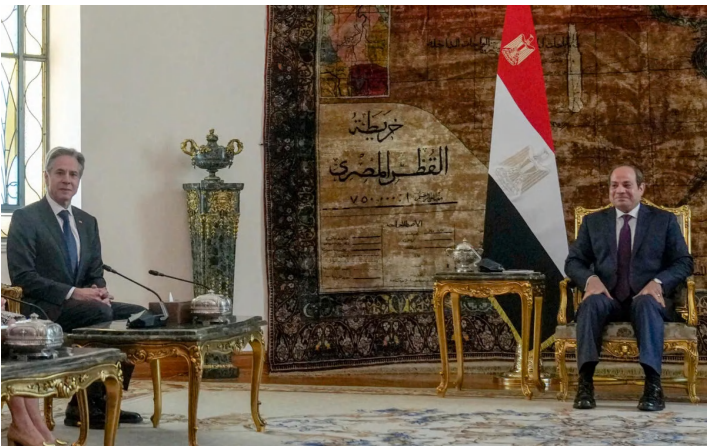
▲ President Volodymyr Zelenskiy is considering a “reset” to replace several senior officials that will go beyond the military sphere.

miss the highly popular army commander, General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi.

The two have been at odds over

the conduct of the nearly two-year Russian invasion of Ukraine.

(Reuters)



▲ U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday landed in Cairo for his meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi.

Blinken to meet Sisi on Gaza hostage deal

CAIRO - U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday landed in Cairo for his meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi as the United States works to advance a Gaza truce and hostage deal mediated by the Egyptians and Qataris.

The top U.S. diplomat departed Riyadh shortly after sunrise for what is set to be a marathon day visiting Egypt and Qatar before flying to Israel to discuss hostage negotiations, post-war Gaza plans and the prospect of Arab countries and Israel normalizing ties.

Blinken’s fifth trip to the region since October comes as the United States presses ahead with its retaliatory campaign against Iran-aligned militia which had attacked last month and killed U.S. troops in a military outpost in Jordan.

Washington sees a possible truce to free remaining hostages Hamas kidnapped on Oct. 7 and pause fighting in Gaza as key to progress on other challenges, such as the governance of post-war Gaza, a path towards Palestinian statehood and a deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia to normalize their relationship. (Reuters)

CollaboNation 2024 applications are now open

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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ARTIST applications for the second edition of CollaboNation, Africa's premier collaboration portal, are now open.

The call-out for interested artists who wish to participate this year was announced at the official CollaboNation 2024 launch, at AMPD Studios in Johannesburg, South Africa on February 6, 2024.

Established African artists with 21 years and older are invited to apply for the opportunity to collaborate with artists from another African country to record original and inspirational songs, in line with the social and environmental values of the MTN Bushfire festival.

All rights to CollaboNation songs and music videos are owned by the artists; produced and licensed by Bushfire Records, a dynamic record label with an authentic and eclectic focus; and distributed in partnership with Paradise Worldwide, a global distribution agency based in Europe. Applications are open from February 7, 2024, and will close on March 7, 2024. Follow this link to apply: <https://bit.ly/CollaboNation2024>

Founded in 2022 and produced by one of the continent's leading conscious music and arts festivals, MTN Bushfire in Eswatini, CollaboNation connects and unites the continent through the creation of unique cross-border and cross-genre songs.

By linking countries and cultures through unique and innovative artist collaborations, CollaboNation is designed to support artists, capacitate the regional



▲ CollaboNation 2023 artist Thobile Makhoyane.

music sector through training and mentorship, and inspire dynamic new African content creation.

CollaboNation is unique in that it facilitates physical meetings and shared studio time for the selected artists to create new, conscious, songs. The songs debuted in a live performance at one of Africa's biggest multi-cultural festivals: MTN Bushfire in Eswatini, which will be held from May 31 – June 2, 2024.

The live performances are filmed for music videos to support the international release of the tracks. At the launch, members of the team presented CollaboNation 2024 to an attentive

audience of the music industry and media practitioners. MTN Bushfire Festival Director Jiggs Thorne spoke about the need to support South-South interactions and intra-African arts mobility.

"Collaboration connects and unites the African continent - and the world - through unique music collaborations that promote and support the cultural legacies of traditional African music within a modern music context. The entire CollaboNation project is intended to support and validate identity, culture, and heritage in a celebration of Africa's diverse and unique cultural roots."

Lady Spesh, DJ TPZ's unreleased song making waves on TikTok

AS an artist, it is always humbling to see your song garnering huge numbers way before it is even released.

Lady Spesh and DJ TPZ's unreleased song is already causing a stir on TikTok, as thousands of users have been vibing to the song before its official release on Valentine's Day.

The 'Sikhiya Semhliziyo' challenge has taken TikTok by storm, with over 8,000 users joining in to dance to the yet-to-be-released soundtrack. Lady Spesh, overwhelmed by the response, expressed gratitude and excitement, describing the feeling as inexplicable. She acknowledged the positive energy from the public and regarded it as a reward for their hard work alongside DJ TPZ.

Lady Spesh, a talented local vocalist, has teamed up with renowned South African producer DJ TPZ to create a beautiful love song titled 'Sikhiya Semhliziyo.' The track, set to be available on all major digital platforms starting February 14, 2024, was intentionally released in the month of love to resonate with lovers worldwide.

The production of this heartfelt

tribute to love was expertly handled by TN\$ Savvy, with DJ TPZ taking charge of the final mastering. The result is an Afro-House masterpiece that celebrates the joy of being loved and appreciated by one's partner.

Surprisingly, Lady Spesh found the process of creating this song to be effortless, despite not currently being in a romantic relationship. Drawing from her experiences and memories of profound love, she effortlessly captured the essence of that euphoric feeling.

Starting with a simple melody, she translated her emotions into heartfelt lyrics, creating a song that touches the soul.

Collaborating with the best producers in the music industry, including DJ TPZ, has been an incredible experience for Lady Spesh.

She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn from these talented individuals and praised the entire team for their unwavering support.



◀ Lady Spesh.



▲ Hip Hop DJ Wassabee will play at Mega Lounge.

Mega Lounge presents 'Get Cuffed or Go Home'

IT is set to be an unforgettable night of excitement for singles looking for potential love connections as Mega Lounge presents the third edition of Get Cuffed or Go Home.

This unique event promises to be a thrilling mix of groove culture and Valentine's Day romance, making it a must-attend for fun-loving individuals seeking a memorable night out.

Set to take place at Mega Lounge on February 16, 2024, Get Cuffed or Go Home offers an innovative approach to mingling and matchmaking. Attendees will be encouraged to participate in a color-coded cup system, allowing them to signal their relationship status and openness to potential connections.

Singles will be equipped with green drinking cups, indicating their availability and desire to meet new people. Taken individuals will proudly display red cups, signaling that they are already in a committed relationship.

For those who fall somewhere in between, blue cups will signify "it depends on who is asking," while yellow cups will represent the complicated nature of their current relationship status.

The event organisers have carefully curated an atmosphere that blends the excitement of a social gathering with the romantic ambiance of Valentine's Day. Get Cuffed or Go Home is not only an opportunity to meet potential partners but also a chance to enjoy an evening of non-stop entertainment and celebration.

Mega Lounge, known for its vibrant energy and top-notch entertainment, has enlisted the talent of local female Hip Hop DJ, Wassabee, to headline the event.

Wassabee the DJ is a new, and fresh talent in the DJ scene. She was born and raised in Eswatini. She started pursuing her burning passion of being a Hip Hop DJ in May 2023. Starting with 'Virtual DJ' to controllers, she recently moved on to CDJs after she mastered the skill through a DJ course.



Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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DEFENDING champion of the ‘Eating Competition,’ Dr Shakes, will go head-to-head with fellow comedian S’chomoketi De Eswatini in a highly anticipated showdown.

The Siteki Edition of the ‘Eating Competition’ is set to take place at the Cypress Basket branch in Siteki and promises to be a thrilling spectacle for both participants and spectators alike. Scheduled for February 24, 2024, the eating competition will challenge the contestants to devour a full unchopped chicken, four rolls, and one liter of Coke.

The first to finish this feast will be crowned the winner. In an exclusive interview with Dr Shakes, the defending champion of this competition, he expressed excitement for the upcoming competition. He acknowledged the chatter on social media, where he is once again labeled as the underdog.

Opportunity

Dr Shakes said he eagerly awaits the opportunity to prove his critics wrong, emphasizing that judging a book by its cover is a mistake. He said he is determined to surprise everyone once again with his eating prowess on the day of the competition.

When asked about his strategy to conquer this edition of the competition,

Dr Shakes revealed that he sees no reason to deviate from his winning formula. He firmly believes that it is unwise to change a strategy that has already brought him success. Additionally, he acknowledged that S’chomoketi will have the advantage of being in his hometown, just as Ndosh did in their previous battle. Dr Shakes confidently stated that he shall defeat all his opponents until Cypress Basket opens a branch in Mbabane, his hometown.

The first edition of the ‘Eating Competition’ witnessed a fierce showdown between Dr Shakes and Ndosh WebeNguni. Dr Shakes emerged as the clear victor, astonishingly devouring an entire chicken in less than 30 minutes, leaving Ndosh with no choice but to surrender to defeat.

Percy P, Emagagu to drop a love song

ESWATINI musicians, Percy P and Emagagu, are gearing up to release a romantic and Swati love song titled ‘Lutsandvo.’

Fans can expect the song to be available on all major digital platforms from February 10, 2024, and it is already open for pre-save on Spotify. In an exclusive interview, Percy P revealed that while wrapping up the project, which was released in December, they realized they had focused on various aspects of life and the challenges people face while hustling and growing as individuals. To bring balance to the project, they decided it was essential to include a love song called ‘Lutsandvo.’ Percy P described ‘Lutsandvo’ as a song about a man expressing his love and appreciation for his partner. He said the song delves into the depths of his emotions, showcasing his willingness to take their relationship to the next level and tie the knot.

The beat for the song was created by DJ Citie, while Milton B took charge of the mixing and mastering process. Percy expressed gratitude to them for consistently delivering the best quality. When asked about the creative process behind the song, Percy P shared that he



▲ (L-R) Emagagu and Percy P.

had requested DJ Citie to provide him with a selection of Afro beats and African songs. Among the options, one beat stood out as the best, and he immediately started writing lyrics to it. Surprisingly, within less than an hour, the song was complete, although it had not yet been recorded.

Inspired

Percy P went on to reveal that he and Emagagu collaborated closely on the songwriting process. Emagagu contributed

an engaging intro, which inspired Percy P to create a simple yet impactful chorus that perfectly aligned with the introduction. The following day, they recorded the song with Milton B, and the energy in the studio was electric. For those who are not familiar with their work, Percy P encouraged them to check out their YouTube channel, ‘Percy P Worldwide,’ or visit their Facebook pages, ‘Percy P Worldwide’ and ‘Emagagu.’



▲ M Age will perform at Soul Therapy.

Soul Therapy to host poetry show in Luyengo

POETRY lovers are to be immersed in a world of words and soul-stirring melodies as Soul Therapy brings forth an unforgettable poetry show at the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) Luyengo Campus.

With an aim to ignite the flames of creativity and touch the depths of the human spirit, this event promises to transport the audience into a realm of poetic brilliance. As the poets take center stage, the atmosphere will be filled with an enchanting ambiance, accompanied by the rhythmic sound of clicking fingers and thunderous applause.

The lineup for the evening is nothing short of extraordinary, featuring a talented ensemble of wordsmiths including M Age, Nashisa, Majaha Nkonyane, Anthonimass, Poetic General, Bheshu, and Siya Imbongi. Guiding the audience through this poetic journey will be the ever smiling and charismatic MC, Gcinimiyalo ‘Proff’ Ntuli.

February 15, 2024, will be the big day as the event will kick off at 6 p.m. and continue until 8 p.m. at UNESWA Luyengo Campus, SLT2. The entry fee for this mesmerizing experience is a mere E30, a small price to pay for an evening that promises to leave a lasting impact on one’s soul.

In an exclusive interview with Soul Therapy’s director, Siphiso ‘Dede’ Dlamini revealed that this event serves as a precursor to the Ematsandvweni event, an immersive hiking experience scheduled for March 2, 2024. Dlamini emphasized that the poetry show is an opportunity to provide a platform for upcoming poets and musicians, allowing them to showcase their talents to a wider audience.

He also revealed that this show will act as a launch of their tertiary institutions’ tour, which began last year at UNESWA Kwaluseni Campus and will continue with their next stop at Mbabane Campus. These events aim to keep the audience engaged and enthralled by the magic of Soul Therapy while creating a platform for the flourishing creative community.

Dlamini passionately urged poetry and music enthusiasts to attend this extraordinary event, promising an evening that will inspire and transform their souls. He assured attendees that they would be served the very best poetry and music, leaving them with an experience they will cherish for a lifetime.

‘The great contraction’ hits Hollywood

WHEN stars returned to the red carpet in early January after two bruising strikes to celebrate the success of “Oppenheimer” and “Succession,” one existential threat above all was on everyone’s mind: Hollywood is shrinking. The era of “peak TV,” is over, said 17 entertainment business executives, agents and bankers who spoke with Reuters.

From fewer original series and movies to greater scrutiny of budgets and a further squeeze on movie theater profits, people who call the shots said the television and film industries are adjusting to sober economic realities.

“The great contraction is upon us,” said one veteran television executive, speaking on condition of anonymity. “I think there will be a significant retrenchment in the quantity of content, and the amount spent on content.”

The contraction story will figure prominently as Walt Disney, Warner Bros Discovery and Fox report quarterly results this month. It is also the backdrop for media merger chatter, most recently sale talks between the owner of Paramount Global and Skydance Media CEO David Ellison, the media mogul whose studio co-produced “Top Gun: Maverick.”

Analyst TD Cowen estimated broadcast and cable television advertising will end 2023 down 7% from the prior year, with total advertising declines of 11.7% at Disney, according to LSEG. Warner Bros Discovery



▲SAG-AFTRA members walk the picket line during their ongoing strike outside Disney Studios in Burbank, California, U.S.

reported a 13% decline in advertising for the first nine months of 2023. Along with print and radio, traditional TV has been “hollowed out” by digital advertising.

The outlook for 2024 is not much better. TD Cowen forecast that broadcast and cable TV ad revenue would fall another 7%. Even though the media companies are expanding their digital ad businesses, the sinking traditional TV business still accounts for 80% of their total advertising revenue, according

to TD Cowen. Streaming services, which were supposed to carry the industry into the future, are also struggling to reach profitability after years of profligate spending. As the industry enters what MoffettNathanson describes as the “third act of the streaming wars,” production spending will fall below 2022 levels, when competition stoked “never sustainable” investment.

Most streaming services are charging more while delivering less new content, feeding

skepticism over their long-term strategy, according to TD Cowen.

The overall number of scripted series is expected to shrink dramatically from the pinnacle of 633 shows released in 2022. The combination of the Hollywood strikes and constrained spending dented production last year, with just 481 U.S. series released in 2023, according to data from market research firm Ampere Analysis.

Even market-leading Netflix slashed the number of scripted series it released by more than one-third from 2022 to 2023, Ampere said. The profitable streaming service, which reported record subscriber gains in its fourth quarter, declined to comment.

Executives who spoke to Reuters said the industry could shed more scripted series and hit the 300-shows range in coming years.

In 2024, the domestic box office will continue to feel the impact of the actors and writers strikes, with just 90 films offered for wide release this year, down from around 100 in 2023, according to MoffettNathanson. With a film slate heavy in untested stories and characters, U.S. box office sales are expected to be \$8 billion in 2024, down 10% from 2023 and down 30% from 2019.

The industry is slowing down, executives said. Development executives are taking longer to greenlight shows, even for projects from established showrunners like Ronald D. Moore, whose credits include “For All Mankind” and “Outlander.”

(Reuters)

Tyla clinched global domination with the viral success of ‘Water’

SOUTH African-born musician Tyla made history by becoming the first winner of the newly created Grammy Awards Best African Music Performance category. Not only did she make history by winning the newly introduced category, but by also becoming the youngest South African artist to win a prestigious Grammy award at just 22-years of age.

Born Tyla Seethal in Edenvale, the middle child of five, became a global name thanks to her smash hit ‘Water’, which earned her the award at the 66th edition, beating out Burna Boy, Davido, Ayra Starr, Musa Keys, among others.

Her break-out single, “Getting Late”, was the most ubiquitous hit of summer 2019, and while the pandemic threw a spanner in the works, it didn’t stop Tyla’s international breakthrough.

Signed to an international recording label Epic Records, the label behind international stars like DJ Khaled, 21 Savage, Future, Black Eyed Peas and Travis Scott, her success has gone one level to the next. Spotify named her one of RADAR

Africa artists, their programme dedicated to driving the discovery of emerging artists across the world.

While “Water” has always been a great song, the birth of the viral “Water challenge”, inspired by the Barcadi dance style, took it to another level. The video, taken on the Giants of Africa stage on August 19, went viral on social media, quickly racking up millions of views and challenges.

“Water” has travelled a long way from the streets of Johannesburg to the global stages, with the US, Philippines, the UK, Brazil, and Australia. It has afforded the young star numerous opportunities on top stages in countries such as Sweden.

“My goal is definitely to become a global star. I’ve always looked up to people like Michael Jackson, Rihanna and Aaliyah,” she told IOL Entertainment in a previous interview.

As she gears up to release her debut album in March, all eyes are on Tyla, but she’s looking forward to it all and even has a tour lined up, as well as her Coachella performance.

(IOL)

▲SA popstar Tyla.



Londie London reacts to ‘dirty rumours’ of cops seizing hijacked BMW

SINGER and businesswoman Londie London on Sunday took to her Instagram Stories to react to the most recent tabloid report she had been named in.

“So someone just wakes up and decides to start dirty rumours?” wrote Londie London, whose real name is Londiwe Zulu, on her Instagram Stories as her name trending on social media.

On Sunday, news broke that police had allegedly confiscated a hijacked BMW 330i believed to have been driven by reality TV star. News of the vehicle being allegedly confiscated came to light during police investigations following a shooting that left three patrons injured, Sunninghill restaurant and nightclub Tempo.

Businessman Sphamandla Mabonga was involved in the altercation, resulting in him being one of the injured. Mabonga is the ex of former ‘The Real Housewives of Durban’ star.

Last year, the star posted on social media a similar vehicle delivered to her home and

how the new vehicle would be for her to go buy bread.

According to the Sunday World, the luxury vehicle was impounded by the police on suspicion that it was hijacked in Eshowe.

“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 Eshowe, KwaZulu-Natal” reported the publication.

Zulu was the talk of the town last year on social media when she showed off her white X5 and days later, she was apparently gifted with the BMW 330i.

In September, Zulu went on Mac G’s Podcast and Chill, and told them the BMW X5 car bought for her had been registered in her name after the previous car she used, a Range Rover, was taken back after she broke up with her ex-partner, who was engaged to her.

She got the second car, the BMW 3 series, after appearing on the podcast.

(IOL)



▲Londie London and her ex-boyfriend Mabonga in happier times.

ONE person standing up for food justice can cause a domino effect.

Historically, oppression and systemic injustices have been a collective experience among Black people living in the United States. The United States was built on indigenous land on the backs of Black people. This is not new information. Yet, this inherited trauma is still influencing our present-day lives.

Simply put, what’s required to be well and thrive aren’t available for all Black people.

Foods that are commonly associated with Black American culture are often unfairly deemed as unhealthy.

Today’s fast-food versions of fried chicken and cured meats are a distant cousin of the delicacies that were enjoyed on special occasions throughout the old agricultural south.

Home cooks of the past were creative and seasoned greens with the ends of cured meats or slow cooked the less desirable cuts because this is what they had access to.

It’s no accident that today our neighborhoods are flooded with the fast and processed versions of soul food.

Why is this?

Racism feeds social injustices like lack of access to jobs, safe housing, personal safety, and quality education. These factors are fundamental determinants of health and well-being.

Across the country, Black communities are disproportionately underfunded, resulting in a significant gap. Racism affects nutrition as a social determinant of health that has a major influence on Black people’s access to healthy food.

There are major structural and systemic inequities, and the nutrition and health-related impact within the Black community has been devastating.

Lack of access

Black communities in both rural and urban areas are more likely to experience food insecurity.

Markets are also redlined — the practice of excluding entire geographic areas from receiving resources — resulting in decreased access to full-service grocery stores.

On the other hand, Black communities often have excessive access to dollar stores and liquor stores that provide nutrient-poor, inexpensive shelf-stable items. These are known as food swamps and food deserts.

Access to basic, essential needs varies widely. It’s greatly dependent on environmental factors, including employment opportunities, safe and affordable housing, education, healthcare, and support through local policies.

These issues, compounded with decreased availability and lower intake of nutrient-dense foods, increase the risk of noncommunicable diseases.

Financial barriers

Without financial means to consistently purchase nutritious foods, food choices are driven by affordability. More often than not, this means they’re rich in added sugars, salts, and synthetic fats.

Historically, Black families haven’t had access to the same financial stability and resources as their white counterparts.

Other financial barriers include statistically lower household income and fewer opportunities for well-paying, livable-wage

Healthy food is a right, not a privilege



jobs.

Black communities often have limited access to financial literacy and savings, lower access to personal and business credit, and relatively lower generational wealth transfer.

There’s a major racial wealth gap detrimentally impacting the Black community.

Education

Many schools within Black communities are underfunded, leaving the children who attend these schools with fewer educational opportunities. This leads to a significant achievement gap. Educational institutions in under-resourced Black communities often lag behind wealthier, adequately funded areas.

This impacts the quality of school lunches and educational resources, such as supportive educational curriculums highlighting health and nutrition.

Solutions

The quality of life within Black communities has been adversely impacted as a result of centuries of bias and hate. Structures need to be dismantled and rebuilt with equity at the forefront.

Funds need to be redistributed to support the most marginalized communities. Humane, quality healthcare needs to be provided to

unburden communities that bear the brunt of metabolic diseases.

People in positions of power need to ask themselves how they can actively contribute to systemic change while dismantling racist practices. There are actionable and measurable steps that can be implemented to bridge these gaps.

Nutrition education

Community-based initiatives that meet community members where they’re at provide valuable knowledge related to health and nutrition. These strong community relationships support long-term change.

Redistribution of funds

The racial wealth gap in the United States continues to burden Black communities. It prevents them from breaking through the systemic barriers hindering wealth-building.

Reallocating funds from overfunded institutions, and instead investing in protecting and uplifting Black communities, could address this centuries-long financial oppression.

Put an end to food swamps

It’s important to be mindful of the ways

we’re discussing and implementing food access in Black communities.

Increasing access to food should be done from a community-centered approach — meaning working with the community to increase nutritious options based on the cultural foodways of community members.

Changing the food landscape of a community is more than simply moving in a full-service grocery store. A holistic approach should include open discussions with Black community members to identify what they want and need.

For example, access to fresh produce may be addressed by holding local farmers markets or organizing Black-led CSA programs.

A dialogue approach enables autonomy, agency, and self-sustaining energy.

What can readers do?

Biases are implicit, and we all have them. All beliefs and behaviors are learned, whether they’re taught through family, friends, and education, or workplace, political affiliation, and social environments.

Society reinforces and perpetuates our implicit biases. Intentionality is required to acknowledge, address, and unlearn our biases, beliefs, and behaviors.

Commit to listening and learning

For non-Black people, recognizing implicit biases can be uncomfortable.

It’s necessary to come to terms with these biases and gain an understanding of how and why they developed, as well as how and why they serve non-Black communities while hurting Black communities.

There are a number of trainings and resources available specifically focused on implicit bias, race, racism, and social determinants of health.

Use your voice

Speak out — engage with your family and friends about the things you learn. We’re influenced by the people who matter to us most.

One person standing up for racial justice can cause a domino effect.

Systemic inequities, racist practices, and cumulative barriers maintain a persistent and widening gap for the Black community.

The generational impact of lacking access to safe, affordable, and nutritious foods, equitable housing, quality healthcare, and financial stability have a deep impact. Solutions focused on lasting change require close collaboration between government agencies and community leaders, with a willingness to restructure the current system.

For widespread evolution to occur, dismantling systemic racism and structural inequities must remain a priority and be elevated to the national agenda to garner the necessary public awareness, education, and support.

Healthline



DIABETES is a chronic disease that affects many people across the globe.

Currently, more than 400 million people have diabetes worldwide. Although diabetes is a complicated disease, maintaining good blood sugar levels can greatly reduce the risk of complications. One of the ways to achieve better blood sugar levels is to follow a low carb diet. This article provides a detailed overview of very low carb diets for managing diabetes.

What is diabetes, and what role does food play?

With diabetes, the body can't effectively process carbohydrates. Normally, when you eat carbs, they're broken down into small units of glucose, which end up as blood sugar.

When blood sugar levels go up, the pancreas responds by producing the hormone insulin. This hormone allows blood sugar to enter cells. In people without diabetes, blood sugar levels remain within a narrow range throughout the day. For those who have diabetes, however, this system doesn't work in the same way.

This is a big problem, because having both too high and too low blood sugar levels can cause severe harm. There are several types of diabetes, but the two most common ones are type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Both of these conditions can occur at any age. In type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune process destroys the insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas. People with diabetes take insulin several times a day to ensure that glucose gets into the cells and stays at a healthy level in the bloodstream. In type 2 diabetes, the beta cells at first produce enough insulin, but the body's cells are resistant to its action, so blood sugar remains high. To compensate, the pancreas produces more insulin, attempting to bring blood sugar down.

Over time, the beta cells lose their ability to produce enough insulin.

Of the three macronutrients — protein, carbs, and fat — carbs have the greatest impact on blood sugar management. This is because the body breaks them down into glucose.

Therefore, people with diabetes may need to take large doses of insulin, medication, or both when they eat a lot of carbohydrates.

Can very low carb diets help manage diabetes?

Many studies support low carb diets for the treatment of diabetes. In fact, before the discovery of insulin in 1921, very low carb diets were considered standard treatment for people with diabetes. What's more, low carb diets seem to work well in the long term when people stick to them. In one study, people with type 2 diabetes ate a low carb diet for 6 months. Their diabetes remained well managed more than 3 years later if they stuck to the diet. Similarly, when people with type 1 diabetes followed a carb-restricted diet, those who followed the diet saw a significant improvement in blood sugar levels over a 4-year period.

What's the optimal carb intake for people with diabetes?

The ideal carb intake for people living with diabetes is a somewhat controversial topic, even among those who support carb restriction. Many studies found dramatic improvements in blood sugar levels, body weight, and other markers when carbs were restricted to 20 grams per day. Dr. Richard K. Bernstein, who has type 1 diabetes, has eaten 30 grams of carbs per day and documented



excellent blood sugar management in his patients who follow the same regimen.

However, other research shows that more moderate carb restriction, such as 70–90 grams of total carbs, or 20% of calories from carbs, is also effective. The optimal amount of carbs may also vary by individual, since everyone has a unique response to carbs.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), there's no one-size-fits-all diet that works for everyone with diabetes. Personalized meal plans, which take into account your dietary preferences and metabolic goals, are best.

The ADA also recommends that individuals work with their healthcare team to determine the carb intake that's right for them.

To figure out your ideal amount of carbs, you may want to measure your blood glucose with a meter before a meal and again 1 to 2 hours after eating. As long as your blood sugar remains below 140 mg/dL (8 mmol/L), the point at which damage to nerves can occur, you can consume 6 grams, 10 grams, or 25 grams of carbs per meal on a low carb diet.

It all depends on your personal tolerance. Just remember that the general rule is the less carbs you eat, the less your blood sugar will rise. And, rather than eliminating all carbs, a healthy low carb diet should actually include nutrient-dense, high fiber carb sources, like vegetables, berries, nuts, and seeds.

Which carbs raise blood sugar levels?

In plant foods, carbs comprise a combination of starch, sugar, and fiber. Only the starch and sugar components raise blood sugar. Fiber that's naturally found in foods, whether soluble or insoluble, doesn't break down into glucose in the body, and doesn't raise blood sugar levels. You can actually subtract the fiber and sugar alcohols from the total carb content, leaving you with the digestible or "net" carb content. For example, 1 cup of cauliflower contains 5 grams of carbs, 3 of which are fiber. Therefore, its net carb content is 2 grams.

A Guide to healthy low carb eating with diabetes

- ▶ Plain, Greek yogurt: 1 cup or less
- Cottage cheese: 1/2 cup or less
- ▶ Nuts and peanuts: 1–2 ounces, or 30–60 grams
- Flaxseeds or chia seeds: 2 tablespoons
- ▶ Dark chocolate (at least 85% cocoa): 30 grams or less
- Winter squash (butternut, acorn, pumpkin, spaghetti, and hubbard): 1 cup or less
- Liquor: 1.5 ounces, or 50 grams
- ▶ Dry red or white wine: 4 ounces, or 120 grams

Foods to avoid

These foods are high in carbohydrates and can significantly raise blood sugar levels in people with diabetes:

- ▶ bread, pasta, cereal, corn, and other grains
- ▶ starchy vegetables, like potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, and taro
- ▶ milk
- ▶ fruit other than berries
- ▶ juice, soda, punch, sweetened tea, etc.
- ▶ beer
- ▶ desserts, baked goods, candy, ice cream, etc.

A sample day of very low carb meals for people with diabetes

Here's a sample menu with 15 grams or less of digestible carbs per meal. If your personal carb tolerance is higher or lower, you can adjust the serving sizes.

Breakfast: Eggs and spinach

- ▶ 3 eggs cooked in butter (1.5 grams of carbs)
- ▶ 1 cup sautéed spinach (3 grams of carbs)
- You can pair your eggs and spinach with:
- ▶ 1 cup blackberries (6 grams of carbs)
- ▶ 1 cup coffee with cream and optional sugar-free sweetener

Total digestible carbs: 10.5 grams

Lunch: Cobb salad

- ▶ 3 ounces (90 grams) cooked chicken
- ▶ 1 ounces (30 grams) Roquefort cheese (1/2 gram of carbs)
- ▶ 1 slice bacon
- ▶ 1/2 medium avocado (2 grams of carbs)
- ▶ 1 cup chopped tomatoes (5 grams of carbs)
- ▶ 1 cup shredded lettuce (1 gram of carbs)
- ▶ olive oil and vinegar

You can pair your salad with:

- ▶ 20 grams (2 small squares) 85% dark chocolate (4 grams of carbs)
- ▶ 1 glass of iced tea with optional sugar-free sweetener
- ▶ Total digestible carbs: 12.5 grams.
- Dinner: Salmon with veggies
- ▶ 4 ounces grilled salmon
- ▶ 1/2 cup sautéed zucchini (3 grams of carbs)
- ▶ 1 cup sautéed mushrooms (2 grams of carbs)

To complement your meal and for dessert:

- ▶ 4 ounces (120 g) red wine (3 grams of carbs)
- ▶ 1/2 cup sliced strawberries with whipped cream
- ▶ 1 ounce chopped walnuts (6 grams of carbs)

Total digestible carbs: 14 grams

Total digestible carbs for the day: 37 grams

Healthline

Prebiotic fiber, such as inulin, has even been shown to improve fasting blood sugar and other health markers in people with type 2 diabetes. Sugar alcohols, such as maltitol, xylitol, erythritol, and sorbitol, are often used to sweeten sugar-free candy and other "diet" products. Some of them, especially maltitol, can actually raise blood sugar levels in people with diabetes. For this reason, use the net carb tool cautiously, as the count listed on a product's label may not be accurate if all the carbs contributed by maltitol are subtracted from the total. Furthermore, the net carb tool isn't used by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the ADA.

This carb counter may be a valuable resource. It provides data for hundreds of foods on total carbs, net carbs, fiber, protein and fat.

Foods to eat and foods to avoid

It's best to focus on eating low carb, whole foods with a lot of nutrients. It's also important to pay attention to your body's hunger and fullness cues, regardless of what you're eating.

Foods to eat

You can eat the following low carb foods until you're full. Also make sure to get enough protein at each meal:

- ▶ meat, poultry, and seafood
- ▶ eggs
- ▶ cheese
- ▶ nonstarchy vegetables (most vegetables except those listed below)
- ▶ avocados
- ▶ olives
- ▶ olive oil, coconut oil, butter, cream, sour cream, and cream cheese

Foods to eat in moderation

You can eat the following foods in smaller quantities at meals, depending on your personal carb tolerance:

Berries: 1 cup or less



▲ A woman looks at a board displaying pictures of hostages kidnapped in the deadly October 7 attack on Israel by the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Tel Aviv, Israel.



▲ Cars drive on flooded streets, during the ongoing rain storm in Studio City, California.



▲ Rain falls over cars stuck by a mudslide, caused by an ongoing rain storm in Studio City, California, INSET Bricks lie on top of a damaged car, during the ongoing rain storm in Studio City, California.



▲ People react as they walk near a burning barricade set up in protest against the government and calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ A member of the media holds a copy of the "Daily Mirror" newspaper while working outside Buckingham Palace, after it was announced that Britain's King Charles has been diagnosed with cancer, in London, Britain.



▲ A girl looks, as divers perform a dragon dance ahead of the Lunar New Year celebration at the Sea Life Bangkok Ocean World aquarium in Bangkok, Thailand.



▲ People walk along Khreshchatyk street as the evening sun breaks through the clouds after a rainy day in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Pochettino struggling to connect with Chelsea fans

LONDON - Successive Premier League defeats in which eight goals have hit the back of the Chelsea net have raised the volume in the debate about Mauricio Pochettino's job prospects at Stamford Bridge. His team were booed after a 4-2 home loss to Wolverhampton Wanderers on Sunday and fans even chanted the name of Chelsea's former serial-winning manager Jose Mourinho.

Chelsea visit high-flying Aston Villa in an FA Cup fourth-round replay on Wednesday when another defeat would pile more pressure on Pochettino.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, the Argentine was quizzed on his post-Wolves remarks when said his expensively-assembled players had not been good enough and was also required to respond to social media comments made by the wife of Thiago Silva calling for change at the club.

It made for an uncomfortable lunchtime for a manager who is still grappling with a new Chelsea project which has seen more than one billion pounds spent on signings since Todd Boehly took over at Stamford Bridge in May 2022.

Chelsea sit 11th in the Premier League and although they have a League Cup final against Liverpool to look forward to this month, Pochettino appears no closer to solving the puzzle he inherited when he accepted the job.

Pochettino, however, insists he has the support of the owners and has no issues with any of his players. "I haven't (heard) anything in another way. I received very good texts



▲ Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino

from them," former Tottenham Hotspur and Paris St Germain coach Pochettino told reporters. "I think we are all together in this and that's important.

"Of course, I am in contact with them and the sporting director every day."

Part of the problem for Pochettino is failing to establish a recognisable style for a group of players who arrived with massive price tags but little Premier League nous -- the likes of Moises Caicedo, Noni Madueke, Mykhailo Mudryk and Nicolas Jackson who have all struggled for consistency.

Another issue is that senior players like Raheem Sterling and Thiago are under-performing.

While the atmosphere has not turned toxic for Pochettino, an apathy has descended on Stamford Bridge this season with fans still to be convinced about the club's decision to invest in raw talents rather than over-ready trophy winners.

"We need to make a good connection with them. The fans need to understand, when you go to Stamford Bridge it is a different Chelsea and project and everything," Pochettino said.

(Reuters)

Djokovic, Nadal to headline 'Six Kings Slam' in Saudi

Saudi Arabia will host a new elite tennis exhibition featuring Novak Djokovic and Rafa Nadal with three other Grand Slam winners in October, the country's General Entertainment Authority has announced.

Carlos Alcaraz, Jannik Sinner, Daniil Medvedev and Holger Rune will also play at the 'Six Kings Slam', which will form part of the Saudi cultural and entertainment festival Riyadh Season, organisers said.

With Sinner having recently won the Australian Open, Dane Rune is the only player on the six-man roster without a Grand Slam title.

Spaniard Nadal, who signed up as an ambassador for the Saudi Arabian Tennis Federation last month, said he was looking forward to the event.

"After some other tennis players have done so, I am very excited to play for the first time in Riyadh," the 22-times Grand Slam champion said in the press

release, opens new tab.

While exhibition events in the Gulf are nothing new, they are usually played during breaks in the ATP season or after it has finished. The ATP has a full schedule in October, including mandatory Masters 1000 tournaments in Shanghai and Paris.

Saudi Arabia will also host the season-ending Next Gen Finals for men's under-21 players in Jeddah from 2023 to 2027, the ATP announced last August.

The oil-rich country has invested heavily in sports like soccer, Formula One and golf over the last few years. However, critics have accused the country of using sport to cover up its poor record on human rights and equality issues.

The debate over Saudi Arabia potentially hosting the women's WTA Finals has intensified, with tennis greats Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova objecting to the move, prompting heavy criticism from Saudi ambassador to the U.S. last week.

(Reuters)



▲ Saudi Arabia will host a new elite tennis exhibition featuring Novak Djokovic and Rafa Nadal.

Swallows now rocked by late coaching staff salaries

THE Moroka Swallows fiasco seems to be far from ending, as it has emerged that the salaries of technical team members have also not been paid by the club. This comes on the back of the recent problems that have engulfed the beleaguered club regarding player salaries that have not been paid by the club for months.

Sources close to the situation have revealed to Sunday World that despite the Dube Birds managing to pay players their outstanding salaries, they are yet to settle the salaries owed to their coaching staff.

The shocking news comes shortly after the South African Players Union (Safpu) president Thulaganyo Gaoshubelwe confirmed that the issues surrounding unpaid salaries at Swallows have stretched over to the coaching staff as well.

The coaches are said to have not contested the matter out of fear of being fired.

"We can confirm that [the salary challenges] are stretched to the rest of the staff at Swallows," Gaoshubelwe told the media recently.



▲ Moroka Swallows head coach Steve Kompela.

Swallows have since retained a portion of the 22 players who were released by the club after renegotiating their contracts.

Efforts to get comment from club chairman David Mogashoa were not successful as his phone was not answered. (Sunday World)

Messi hopes to play in Tokyo friendly

TOKYO - After disappointing a legion of fans in Hong Kong with a no-show on the pitch at the weekend, Lionel Messi left open the possibility of playing in Inter Miami's friendly in Tokyo, saying he left "much better" than he did a few days ago.

The Argentine's benching for the highly anticipated match in front of a sellout crowd at Hong Kong Stadium has turned into a public relations debacle for his Major League Soccer side and organisers of the local event.

Speaking to media for the first time since the team and their co-owner David Beckham were booed off the field, Messi said on Tuesday it was "disappointing" that he was unable to play, citing swelling in his adductor muscle.

"In Hong Kong, we had an open-door training session and I went out because there was such a big crowd there and there was a clinic with the kids, and I wanted to be there and participate," the 36-year-old told a press con-



▲ Lionel Messi left open the possibility of playing in Inter Miami's friendly in Tokyo,

ference at a Tokyo hotel. "But the truth is that the discomfort was still there and it was very difficult for me to play.

"I can understand that people were looking forward to it and I hope that there will be another opportunity for me to play in Hong Kong." (Reuters)



Bafana have history to overcome against Nigeria

WEDNESDAY's semifinal in Bouake marks the fourth time that the two continental superpowers go up against each other in the tournament, since they first met at the 2000 finals which Nigeria co-hosted with Ghana.

This is what happened in those three past encounters:

February 2000 – Nigeria 2 South Africa 0

Bafana's last appearance in a Cup of Nations semifinal came in Lagos where they were swiftly dealt with by the Super Eagles, who scored in the first minute through Tijani Babangida. He ran at the Bafana defence to score a superb individual effort. Bafana had disposed of the co-hosts Ghana in the previous round and looked to have strong credentials as they looked to reach a third successive final. But it was a nightmare game for many in the side, notably Mark Fish and John Moshoeu, with little going right for Bafana. The Dutch-based Babangida then added a second just past the half-hour mark, curling the ball into the right side of the goal as he sprinted down the left, to effectively end any contest. South Africa went onto edge Tunisia on penalties in the third place play off while Nigeria lost on post-



▲South Africa Goalkeeper Ronwen Williams saved an incredible four penalties against Cape Verde. (Right) Nigeria players celebrating a goal.

match spotkicks in their own final to Cameroon.

January 2004 – Nigeria 4 South Africa 0

A thumping loss for Bafana in Monastir, Tunisia in the group phase of the Cup of Nations after they had won their opening match against Benin. Nigeria were a whole different proposition and South Africa were quickly in trouble as Joseph Yobo scored in the fourth minute. Bafana were still

in the contest before 'Jay-Jay' Okocha doubled the score with a 64th minute penalty and substitute Peter Odemwingie rubbed salt into South African wounds with two goals in two minutes in the dying minutes. South Africa, coached then by Styles Phumo, were thoroughly outplayed and it contributed to a disappointing draw in their last group game against Morocco, which saw them drop out after the group stage of the tourna-



ment. Nigeria lost on penalties to eventual winners Tunisia in the semifinal.

June 2019 – Nigeria 2 South Africa 0

South Africa had upset hosts Egypt in the last-16 of the Cup of Nations to setup a meeting with Nigeria in Cairo in the quarterfinal of the newly expanded 24-team tournament. Samuel Chukwueze, who is in the squad for the tournament in the Ivory Coast, scored first after being set up by Alex Iwobi with his initial effort blocked by Thulani Hlatshwayo but falling back for him to finish on the run. Bon-

gani Zungu equalised with 20 minutes to go from a header at a free kick, although initially it was not awarded for offside. (Supersport)

Ivory Coast strong despite stutters

HOSTS Ivory Coast are fancied to continue their remarkable revival at the Africa Cup of Nations and ride a frenzied wave of home support as they seek a place in the final with victory over the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The two meet in Abidjan on Wednesday just hours after Nigeria face South Africa in Bouake in the first semifinal. The winners advance to Sunday's final in Abidjan.

The Ivorians have put aside their stuttering start to the tournament, including a humiliating 4-0 loss in the group stage to tiny Equa-

torial Guinea, to reach the final four, roared on by capacity home crowds.

They return to Abidjan's Alasane Ouattara Olympic Stadium, which is where they delivered timid performances in the group stage but now look a revitalised side after their come-from-behind knockout round success over holders Senegal and neighbours Mali.

"We were at the bottom of a hole after losing to Equatorial Guinea. We had to wait for the (rest of the) group matches to (finish to) find out whether we qualified, which hap-



▲The Ivory Coast kit in the changeroom. (Left) DRC players.

pened. After all that we endured, we are no longer afraid of anything," said influential Ivorian midfielder Seko Fofana.

"After the Equatorial Guinea match we were insulted and we felt alone. But we managed to get through. Champions always manage to advance," he added.

The Ivorians take on a Congolese outfit who drew four successive matches before their 3-1 quarterfinal win over Guinea.

They had set advancing from their group, which they did despite

three draws, as their primary ambition for the tournament so anything they achieve now is a bonus.

"But now we are in the semifinals, it would be stupid not to believe we can go on and get into the final," said coach Sebastien Desabre. The Congolese won the second of their two Cup of Nations triumphs 50 years ago when the country was known as Zaire.

Nigeria have won all three previous meetings with South Africa at past Cup of Nations finals, the last in the 2019 quarterfinal in Cairo.

Both sides have kept clean sheets through their last four outings at the tournament and beaten off difficult opponents to reach the semis.

Nigeria edged the Ivorians in the group stage and Cameroon in the last-16 while South Africa eliminated pre-tournament favourites Morocco.

"I think Nigeria is a team that has become better and better," said South Africa coach Hugo Broos.

(Supersport)

Swimmers Siwakhile, Chadd off to Qatar for World Champs

By Ntokozi Magongo
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LOCAL swimmers Siwakhile Dlamini and Chadd Ning will be part of the 2 600 elite athletes from 190 nations to compete in the FINA World Aquatics Championships in Doha, Qatar.

The team is set to leave the country on Wednesday for the games to be held from February 8 to 18 in Doha. They will be accompanied by Coach Mark Hoare and Manager Nozipho Mahlalela.

Only Siwakhile Dlamini will join the rest of the team in Qatar as she is based in Thailand and she will connect straight to Qatar.

Eswatini Swimming Association (ESA) confirmed the departure of the team.

According to world aquatics-doha2024.com, the primary venues for the championship are the Aspire Dome, Hamad Aquatic Centre, and the Old Doha Port, chosen for their technical suitability, experience in hosting major international events, and their ability to create an unforgettable experience for both participants and spectators alike.

"We take this opportunity to wish the selected athletes and officials the very best in their competition and hope that they will make Eswatini proud," reads the statement from ESA.

Meanwhile, the team Manager Nozipho Mahlalela is also expected to attend the Federation of International Swimming Association (FINA) Congress where she will represent the President and the association.



▲ Local swimmers Siwakhile Dlamini (r) and Chadd Ning (l) will be part of the 2 600 elite athletes from 190 nations to compete in the FINA World Aquatics Championships in Doha, Qatar.



SIWAKHILE DLAMINI

'Bhubesi' takes a break from professional pool

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

NATIONAL team player Nkosinathi 'Bhubesi' Sihlongonyane has taken a break professional pool. The top player announced his decision after winning the Manzini singles tournament. The ex-Correctional pool club player was attached to Way Inn last season under the Manzini Regional Pool Association (MRPA).

"I have decided to take a break from the professional pool and I will now focus on the singles tournaments," he said.

Sihlongonyane said he was confident his decision would bring positive to his career.

"I believe my decision will improve my life as I have been able to raise money to support my family with my recent prize monies," he said.

The player recently made E20 000 within two months in the Eswatini pool festival and the Manzini singles tournament where he won E18 000 and E2 000 respectively.



▲ National team player Nkosinathi 'Bhubesi' Sihlongonyane has taken a break professional pool.

However, the player's decision could cost him a place in the national team.

Eswatini Cue Sports Association Secretary Mbongeni 'Mdlikiza' Gamedze said nonregistered players are not allowed to part in the national team.

Sihlongonyane has already represented the country in the 2023 All Africa pool championships and Hawley Cup which were both held in Johannesburg.

Wandile Maziya eyeing Olympic slot

LOCAL Taekwondo star Wandile Maziya is targeting to qualify for the 2024 Olympic Games.

The seasoned athlete said this ahead of their trip to Senegal for the continental qualifiers between Friday and Sunday in Dakar.

"I am excited and honoured to represent my country in such an important assignment. My target is to get a podium finish and I have prepared very well as I have been training twice a day," he said.

Meanwhile, Eswatini Taekwondo Federation (ETF) Zakhele Dlamini said preparations for the assignment were at an advanced stage.

"We are confident that the team will do well in the tournament and qualify for the Olympic Games," he said.

Other members of the national team include Mfanawekhaya Dube and the female duo of Carlotta Munave and Nonhle Maduma.

The quartet previously represented in the 2023 African championships which were held in Abidjan.

The four-member team will be under the tutelage of internationally recognized coach Mancoba Motsa during the assignment.

The squad is expected to leave the country on Wednesday morning for Senegal by road to Johannesburg, where they will connect a flight to Dakar at OR Tambo International Airport.

Mozambique-based star Saneliso Masuku missed out on the Olympic Games qualifiers.

This follows his recent loss to Maziya during the local qualifying tournament.

The national team has been funded to the tune of E140 000 by the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA).

The national side is also expected to be part of team Eswatini during



▲ Local Taekwondo star Wandile Maziya is targeting to qualify for the 2024 Olympic Games.

the 2024 African Games in Ghana in March.

Other upcoming international assignments include the World Junior

Championships and the World Senior Championships which are set to take place before the end of the year.

By Sibusiso Masilela
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GREEN Mamba Chairman Davis Zwane is confident that the ‘Correctional Services’ side will bounce back to winning ways.

This follows the four-match winless run in the MTN Premier League which has seen the defending champions drop to the fourth position on the log standings.

“We will soon turn the corner in the league where we have struggling to results. This has been caused by fatigue which has hugely affected our players, mainly our starting xi. The players need some time to recharge,” he said.

Zwane further stated that their target is to defend the league title and the SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup.

“We are still aligned to the mandate which we were given by the club President (Lamakhosini Dlamini) which is to ensure that both the league and Ingwenyama Cup

remain in our trophy cabinet. We urge our supporters to continue supporting the team in numbers,” Zwane said.

The green and white have already won claimed some early season silverware in the revived Trade Fair Cup.

The Ernest Mavuso led charges are currently sitting at four in the log table with 28 points after 16 matches.

‘Inyoka eluhlazana’ will take on Nsingizini Hotspurs in the Ingwenyama Cup quarter-final clash slated for the Mayaluka Stadium on Saturday.

The team recently lost the services of their captain Mxolisi Mkhonto to Botswana Premier League side Jwaneng Galaxy.



▲ Green Mamba hope to turn the tables after dropping to fourth spot in the Premier League.

No rest for runners as #Resolution Run next

Stories by Ntokozo Magongo
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RUNNERS will be back on the road on February 17 when they compete in the Lactalis #Resolution Run.

The event is billed for Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary and already over 400 runners have registered for the event. Lactalis Eswatini has sponsored the event to the tune of E70 000 with E45 000 for cash prizes and the balance for water points and some of their products.

There were over 500 runners that took part in the Yellow Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon that was held in Lobamba on Saturday. The event was also graced by the Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima.

The Yellow Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon as the first road race under the Eswatini Athletics (AE) the #Resolution Run will be the second. The road races are not aimed at competition but also for physical fitness and healthy living.

AE Communications Officer Victor

‘Mavikane’ Dlamini said they were targeting over 700 athletes for the #Resolution Run and they were happy that already over 400 have registered.

He said the event will also see international athletes coming, something that contributes to the tourism in the country. The event is organised by the Big Games Park and runners will enjoy running in a friendly environment that is home to animals.

Meanwhile, Big Games Park Sales and Marketing Manager Xolani Gama said registration for the event as still open. She said

online entries can be done on www.biggamesparks.org/ event and they close on February 9.

It’s E230 for the 21km Cabana Challenge, E140 for the Oracle Mini Challenge and E100 for the 5km NTT Toyota Fun Run.

▼ Some of the athletes who took part in the Yellow Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon. Next is the Lactalis #Resolution Run billed for February 17 at Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary.

Shukuma Eswatini visits Dvokodvweni Inkhundla

DVOKODVWENI Inkhundla will come alive on Saturday when it hosts the Shukuma Eswatini initiative by the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council (ESRC).

This is the second event in the year 2024 after the first edition was hosted under the Manzini South Inkhundla last Saturday.

The first edition was graced by the Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima, Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo and ESRC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Darius Dlomo.

ESRC Media Officer Dumisani Ntiwane invited all the people under the Inkhundla

to attend without fail as there are lot of activities to be held on the day. He said part of the mandate was to introduce some sporting codes to the people.

“It’s all set for the event and we hope the people will come in their numbers. They will take part in different sporting codes that will be on display. We are happy with the response we got from the first edition at Manzini South,” he said.

Some of the sporting codes that will on display on the day include netball, karate, table tennis, volleyball, tennis, cycling, rugby, cricket, motorsport and athletics among others.

Ntiwane said the event will start at 8am with a walk run that will cover 8km.



▲ Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima.

Ayikabuyi ka-Somhlolo

By Ntokozo Magongo
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IBUYILE!!.... But not ka-Somhlolo!

The Ingwenyama Cup quarterfinals returns this weekend with mouthwatering double headers to be played at Mayaluka Stadium and Mavuso Sports Centre respectively.

Hopes for the Ingwenyama Cup Management to have the quarterfinals at the country's soccer mecca have hit a snag.

The Ingwenyama Cup Management Committee (MC) Chairman Dr. Comfort Shongwe and PLE CEO Kenneth Makhanya in the presence of the Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima made the passionate plea to have the games at Somhlolo



National Stadium during the Last Eight draw at SMVFA head offices a week ago.

The national stadium is currently closed for events and it is yet to be officially allowed to host the event. It hosted the Ingwenyama Cup grand opening on January 7.

Three times winners, Mbabane Swallows

will host Pigg's Peak Rangers on Sunday at Mavuso Sports Centre at 1:30pm with Mbabane Highlanders taking on Ezulwini United at 4pm.

The other double header is billed for Mayaluka Stadium where defending champions Green Mamba will face off against Nsingizini Hotspurs at 1:30pm and the last match will be between Young Buffaloes and Madlenya at 3:45pm.

The last eight fixtures were released by the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kenneth Makhanya on Tuesday.

The only minnows now left in the tournament is National First Division League side, Pigg's Peak Rangers who are already guaranteed of E105 000 for being the best finishers from lowers division and the E75 000 for reaching the quarter-finals stage.

The tournament started with

32 and 20 of those teams have already been shown the exit door including Premier League sides, Manzini Wanderers, Denver Sundowns, Moneni Pirates, Manzini Sea Birds, Illovo and Royal Leopard.

The winners of the will be handed the CAF Confederation Cup ticket and be awarded with E1.4 million while the runner up will get E530 000.

SATURDAY (FEBRUARY 10)

MAYALUKA STADIUM:

Green Mamba	vs	N. Hotspurs	1:30pm
Y. Buffaloes	vs	Madlenya	3:45pm

SUNDAY (FEBRUARY 11)

Mavuso Sports Centre:

M. Swallows	vs	PPK Rangers	1:30pm
M. Highlanders	vs	Ezulwini	4pm



Nsingizini out to stun Green Mamba – Shiba

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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NSINGIZINI Hotspurs will be out to stun Green Mamba during the crunch SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup quarter-final fixture slated for Saturday at Mayaluka Stadium, kick-off 1:30pm.

The Shiselweni based side President Derrick Shiba said they were geared up to face the defending champions in the epic last eight encounters.

"This is an exciting fixture, and we will do our level best to get positive results to prove that we are the 'real team green'. We will do our level best to ensure that we emerge victorious on the day," he said.

Shiba further stated their vision to qualify for continental competitions and further export players to international clubs.

"We are still focused on our vision of qualifying for continental competitions and seeing our players secure international moves. We are still working hard to take our brand to the next level," Shiba said.

'Insingi yezulu' will be seeking revenge against the correctional services following their 4-0 loss to the same team



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs President Derrick Shiba with new player Muzi Mkhonta.

during the first-round encounter.

Nsingizini also has an existing memorandum of understanding with DStv premiership side AmaZulu FC.

The partnership recently saw development coach Terisayi Changara and physical trainer Promise Mandidzidze

attend an attachment with the Durban based side.

Nsingizini recently enlisted the services of several players such as Nyasha Nyantuli (Zimbabwe), Nkosingphile Shongwe, Muzi Shongwe, Yekisiswe Khumalo, among others in the recent transfer window.

... Tobias redeployed

NSINGIZINI Hotspurs have made another technical change.

The green and white deployed their assistant coach Tobias Ntuli to the ladies team three weeks ago.

Ntuli joined the team two seasons ago from Seven Dreams.

He was part of the technical team that guided the team to back MoMo Cup success.

The team's head coach Alexis Sergion from Zimbabwe is now assisted by his Malawian mentor Charles Manda at the ambitious Hluti-based side.

Other members of the current technical bench include Njabuliso Simelane (goalkeeper coach) and Promise Mandidzidze (physical trainer).

Nsingizini Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Banele Ngobe confirmed the updates.

"We have made some changes in the technical bench which is part of the restructuring process," he said.

The team has already won back-to-back MoMo Cup titles since they acquired Premier League status from Vovovo FC two seasons ago.



**Bafana have history
to overcome
against Nigeria**

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**Nsingizini out
to stun Green
Mamba – Shiba**

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Daily News
Sport



**Ayikabuyi
Ka-Somhlolo**

... Hopes by Management Committee to have this weekend's quarterfinal matches at the country's soccer mecca dashed as Mayaluka Stadium and Mavuso Sports Centre will play host to the last eight matches. *Page 23*