



## OVC to benefit from govt's **E605 million** education project

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*"Yatfutuka Imfundvo Yakitsi,  
Lachakaza  
Likusasa  
Lemaswati"*

By Ncaba Ntshakala

IN what will come as nothing as a sweet melody to the ears of several emaSwati, Orphaned and Vulnerable Children will benefit from the over E605 million World Bank and Global Partnership for Education - GPE -funded education programme. This great news was delivered by Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre through her representative, Principal Secretary Melusi Masuku.

► SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2



Page 4

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Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala

# OVC to benefit from govt's E605m education project

IN what will come as nothing as a sweet melody to the ears of several emaSwati, Orphaned and Vulnerable Children will benefit from the over E605 million World Bank and Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funded education programme.

This great news was delivered by Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre through her representative, Principal Secretary Melusi Masuku.

This was during the launch of the multimillion-dollar project on Thursday. The World Bank will pump in about E514.6 million (US\$27 million) and it will be supplemented by E90.5 million (US\$4.75 million) from GPE to strengthen the country's early childhood development and basic education systems and support human development capital in the Kingdom.

The multi-million dollar funded project is themed Themed "Yatfutuka Imfundvo Yakitsi, Lachakaza Likusasa Lemaswati" (meaning "Eswatini education developing, a bright future for emaSwati. Other dignitaries present during the launch were Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo and World Bank Country Representative Ikechi Okorie.

The DPM welcomed the inclusion of the OVC education programme within the larger World Bank-funded project. "It is worth noting that the launch of this project takes place only a few weeks after the start of the current school calendar year," said the DPM, adding that this signifies the immediate impact this initiative will have on vulnerable children in our education system.

The DPM further acknowledged the "thorny issue" of OVC education for her office and the government as a whole. The inclusion of the programme within the broader project, according to the DPM, demonstrates the government's commitment to addressing this critical challenge.

"We are grateful to the World Bank and the Ministry of Education for recognizing the importance of supporting OVCs in their educational pursuits," the DPM said. She said this programme represents a significant step forward in ensuring that all children in Eswatini have access to quality education and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

"This initiative aligns seamlessly with Eswatini's national development priorities, specifically the National Strategic Development Plan (2018/19-2022/23) and the new Education Strategic Sector Plan (2022-2034). These plans emphasize improving learning outcomes, increasing access to and completion of education, strengthening teacher development and management, and building resilience within the education sector.

The project's core objectives focus on establishing critical building blocks for enhanced service delivery in early childhood development, foundational learning, and secondary education. This holistic approach aims to better prepare children and youth for the future, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive.

Beyond direct service delivery, the project also prioritizes strengthening the management of the education sector. This includes implementing improved data collection, analysis, and dissemination practices. By fostering a culture of accountability for results, the project aims to ensure the efficient and effective utilization of resources. Making his remarks, the Minister of Education and Training, Owen Nxumalo applauded the World Bank and expressed that he is greatly honoured to be in the presence of all key partners in the



▲ The Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo, Country Representatives and officials posing for a group picture during the launch of the World Bank and Global Partnership for Education funded project .



▲ Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo speaking during the launch.



▲ Melusi Masuku, Principal Secretary in the DPM's Office who was representing the Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla.



▲ World Bank Country Representative Ikechi Okorie delivering his remarks during the launch.

## World Bank emphasises collaboration for success of project

THE World Bank Country Representative Ikechi Okorie highlighted the importance of collaboration during the launch of a new project aimed at strengthening early childhood development and basic education systems in Eswatini.

While acknowledging the project's significance, the representative stressed that "this is only the beginning of a challenging and hopefully exciting journey!" The representative emphasized that successful implementation is crucial for the project's long-term impact. He called for "stronger institutional collaboration and coordination amongst all stakeholders.

aspects of special needs education into all components from ECD to secondary levels and beyond. He also stressed the importance of viewing the project as a springboard for sustained improvement, urging officials to ensure its activities continue beyond the initial implementation phase.

common goal of "Education for All".

He added that the Ministry and the Government of Eswatini are committed to ensuring that 'no child is left behind' and they will ensure that all children access and complete their education, especially their basic education. The Minister further expressed components of the project:

### The World Bank project components as presented by the Minister of Education;

**Component 1 Early Childhood Care and Development (ECD):** Led by Dr. D. Hlophe and Nokukhanya Dlamini, this component focuses on supporting Grade o classes in rural primary schools. It aims to provide additional learning materials and teacher training to improve the quality of education and reduce dropout rates in lower primary grades. This ensures children, especially in rural areas, enter primary school with a strong foundation in ECD.

### Component 2 Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Early Grades:

Coordinated by Vusi Simelane, this component targets Grades 1 to 3. It seeks to enhance literacy and numeracy skills through in-service teacher training in new teaching methodologies and ongoing assessments to monitor and support student development. The initial phase will be implemented in 246 rural public primary schools across all regions.

### Component 3 Enhancing Science and Math Instruction in Secondary Education:

Managed by Mgcibelo Tsela in collaboration with senior science and math inspectors, this component aims to improve the quality of science and math instruction in secondary schools. The project will introduce the Progressive Science Initiative (PSI) and Progressive Mathematics Initiative (PMI) in 20 schools initially, eventually expanding to 126 public secondary schools. These initiatives involve providing schools with equipment like printers, computers, microscopes, and projectors, along with teacher training to improve delivery and effectiveness.

### Component 4 Boosting Retention in Secondary Education:

Coordinated by Nokuthula Dlamini and Fezile Khumalo, this component focuses on 62 secondary schools, a subset of those involved in the science and math initiative. The project will also collaborate with an NGO to establish youth clubs in these schools. These clubs will provide support and guidance to students on various topics approved by the National Curriculum Centre, aiming to encourage them to stay in school. This sub-component will work with the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) to assess and potentially improve the existing OVC education grant program to enhance its effectiveness in promoting retention.

The Minister further emphasized that the project adheres to the Ministry's inclusive education approach, integrating



# Deaths, burning of businesses hurt me a lot – Mthandeni Dube

By Bahle Gama  
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NGWEMPHISI former Member of Parliament Mthandeni Dube expressed his heartbreak over the burning of businesses and the people who died during the June 2021 unrest.

Dube was giving his sworn mitigation before Judge Mumcy Dlamini on Thursday morning after his co-accused former Hosea MP Bacede Mabuza mitigated on Wednesday.

“It hurt me a lot to learn that there were people who died during the unrest and property was burnt, something which I learnt about while in prison. It is my prayer and wish that we all heal and work towards bringing peace to the country and the lives of emaSwati,” Dube said.

The MPs were on July 25, 2021, arrested and charged with the Suppression of Terrorism Act and murder, after they incited members of the public to riot against the Government of Eswatini during the political unrest, which resulted in the loss of life, destruction of public and private property.

## Acquitted

Mabuza was acquitted of the offence of breaching the Covid-19 regulations which he allegedly committed during a community meeting that was attended by about 2000 people at Hosea Inkhundla in June 2021.

Mabuza and Dube had denied the evidence led by the crown’s witnesses and insisted that all they did was explain the constitutional rights to the people of Eswatini.

They told the court that banning the delivery of petitions was unlawful and denied that the riot by the people was birthed by their encouragement to have emaSwati continue with the delivery of their petitions.

When delivering the verdict on June 1, Judge Mumcy set the nine reasons why she found the former MPs guilty of inflicting violence during the unrest and murder.

Dube told the court that when they were arrested, he learned of the damage that was caused by people who wanted to satisfy their agendas in businesses around the country, as



▲ Mthandeni Dube and Bacede Mabuza in conversations with their lawyers at the High Court in Mbabane yesterday.

well as the death of emaSwati.

He further told the court that before his arrest, he was taking care of his 75-year-old mother who has hypertension (BP) and was being treated for TB when he was arrested.

He went on to say that he was looking after five of his two late brothers’ children, two of whom are in college, and the other two in high school.

“I also have a wife and three children, one who is in high school and the other in primary,” he submitted. Dube further told the court that he helps 150 children in the Ngwempisi community with toiletry and

school shoes, adding that he is not a wealthy person but has always believed there is a major role he could play in people’s lives with the little he has.

“I am also a farmer who breeds cattle and goats, which to date, my incarceration has resulted in that business not doing well.

I respect your verdict, but I continue to maintain my plea of not guilty,” he said.

The former MP pleaded that when Judge Mumcy hands down sentencing, she must put into consideration his submissions before the court. These include the poverty he foresees striking his children should

his incarceration be continued, as well as deteriorating his mother’s health, whom he has been taking care of.

Dube further disclosed that prison life was very hard, however, he has been able to learn a lot and grow, having encountered people from different walks of life with different mindsets. “It has been a difficult experience, and I wouldn’t want to relive it because it is a tough life. I also do not wish to see any of my children or relatives ever going to that place,” he said.

The matter returns on March 26 for sentencing.

## Lidwala Insurance stands by its claims process

By EDN Reporter

**LIDWALA Insurance stands by its claims process and refuses to get into a public arena of mudslinging following a concerted social media effort to discredit the organisation.**

The management on Thursday issued a public statement to clarify how its processes work when an individual submits a claim.

“It has come to our attention that various sections of the print and electronic media have reported about a claim that was allegedly not paid by Lidwala for political reasons. While we are not in a position to comment directly on the particular claim because of Data Protection laws, we, however, feel obliged to set the record straight,” the organisation said

“Lidwala Insurance is a reputable insur-

ance company, regulated by the Financial Services Regulatory Authority. All insurance coverage issued by our company is issued against a detailed policy wording that spells out the details of what is covered and the parameters of cover.”

Lidwala Insurance said at the claims stage, all losses incurred by insured persons are evaluated against the parameters of cover issued.

“Therefore, it is imperative to mention that Lidwala has a robust claims payment procedure in place to ensure that all clients receive their rightful claims settlements within the stipulated time frame,” Lidwala management said.

Social media has been inundated with reports of people seemingly with ulterior motives calling for the boycott of the company. This followed reports by some sectors of the media that published untested allegations and claims made by convicted former MP Mduduzi Bacede Mabuza in court.

He claimed that he was not paid out after a claim because someone issued an instruction against that. The Eswatini Daily News has, however, been able to establish that there is no truth to the statements.

“Further, in the unfortunate event that a claim has to be rejected, the Client is fully appraised of the reasons for rejection and their rights in terms of the law. Clients not satisfied with the outcome of a claim have a right to approach the Ombudsman Financial Services to file a complaint against their insurer,” the Lidwala management added.

The company said it could not go into detail regarding the matter as they are governed by laws and regulations that demand the protection of clients’ information. It further refuted that external parties can swing the decision for a claim to be paid.

“Client rights and client confidentiality are key to our company and we do not consult with any external parties before claims are admitted”.



▲ Lidwala Insurance Managing Director Dr Thokozani Nkambule.





▲ The highly anticipated 2024 Budget Speech, originally scheduled for delivery by the Minister of Finance on Friday, February 23rd, has been postponed.

# Budget Speech postponed to Monday

Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala

THE highly anticipated 2024 Budget Speech, originally scheduled for delivery by the Minister of Finance on Friday, February 23rd, has been postponed. This announcement was made by the Clerk to Parliament, Benedict Xaba, in a statement released on Thursday, February 22nd. The statement, issued following consultations with the Speaker of the House of Assembly Jabulani Mabuza, did not specify the reason for the postponement. However, it assures that the revised date for the speech is Monday, February 26th, 2024, commencing at 10:00 AM.

While the Budget Speech delivery has been delayed, Members of Parliament are still expected to attend a sitting on Friday, February 23rd, at 10:00 AM. The statement concludes by apologizing for any inconvenience caused by the postponement. This year's Budget Speech is expected to generate particular interest due to the positive economic climate surrounding Eswatini. The nation has recently witnessed a significant increase in revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), a regional trade bloc. This financial boost has fueled speculation of a potential increase in government spending, raising questions about how these additional resources will be allocated.

## Eswatini, India discuss strengthening cooperation as Minister meets delegation

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu received a courtesy call from an Indian delegation led by Secretary Puneet Kundal on Wednesday. The visit aimed to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two nations. The discussions focused on exploring avenues for enhancing cooperation between Eswatini and India in various areas of mutual interest. The visit builds upon the recent India-Eswatini Foreign Affairs Consultations (FOC) held on February 19th, where officials from both countries engaged in comprehensive discussions on bilateral, regional, and global issues. India and Eswatini, enjoy cordial and friendly relations. While not as extensive as India's partnerships with some other African nations, the relationship between the two countries holds significance in various

aspects. India's relations with Eswatini are close, friendly, and cordial. The first resident Indian Mission in Mbabane started functioning on 13 August 2019 on the assumption of charge of Radha Venkataraman as High Commissioner of India. India has had a bilateral trade agreement with Eswatini since 2002 whereby both countries have granted Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to each other. India has also extended development assistance to Eswatini in various sectors, including agriculture, education, and health-care. Indian experts have provided training and capacity-building programs, while Indian grant aid has supported specific projects in Eswatini. Both India and Eswatini collaborate on various international platforms, sharing similar views on certain regional and global issues.



▲ Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu 3rd from right with the Indian High Commission representatives during the courtesy meeting.



## Ingwenyama Cup Cultural Competition Tingoma

- EMAJAHA - Nawe Mswati uyalibusa lelive
- LUTSANGO - Live liyafanana
- INGADLA - Ligcebesha leNgwenyama lisemaveni
- SIBHACA - Sambamba tsekwane inyoni yemasoka
- TIMBONGI - Kubongwa Emakhosi lakhona (Ingwenyama noma Indlovukazi)

Shiselweni - 24 February  
Venue: King Sobhuza Stadium

Hhohho - 02 March  
Venue: Buhleni Sport Ground

Marzini - 25 February  
Venue: Mavuso Sport Centre

Labombo - 03 March  
Venue: Siteki Ground next to bus rank



Prime Minister Challenges nation:

# ‘Look for solutions to education system’

By Silindzelwe Nxumalo  
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● The premier was speaking on the second day of the Global Leadership Summit at Potter’s Wheel Church at Emafini

PRIME Minister (PM) Russell Dlamini has challenged emaSwati and fellow Africans to develop an education system that is not only dependent on schools and teachers but one that is based on respect for family values which makes the family the right institution in which to raise a child.

Dlamini was speaking on the second day of the Global Leadership Summit at Potter’s Wheel Church at Emafini on Thursday.

The PM said that Africans and emaSwati must reject any attempts to remove faith from the school system and curriculum.

“We must also carefully and jealously guard against the introduction of values that are contrary to our faith and traditional values to our children in the name of globalisation. We must not be apologetic about who we are and what we stand for,” he said.

Dlamini urged emaSwati and Africans to unleash the potential of the young leaders and allow their creative spirit to bring positive growth among the youth and must raise young men and women who believe that their country can do better if we are pragmatic. He stated that these are young men and women who are confident in themselves, and this will require an education system that is not only dependent on schools and teachers but one that is based on respect for family values, one that makes the family the right institution in which to raise a child.

The PM further highlighted that Africa needs strong leaders to take Africans to the future, and leaders that realise the worth of this continent. He stated that these should be leaders who will not allow the difficult past to be repeated.

“We must be aware that it is not far-



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini making his presentation at the Global Leadership Summit.

fetched that there are those who are benefactors and thrive from the wealth of this rich continent. We cannot and must not allow Africa and its people to be impoverished and enslaved in any form again. We need leaders and not people-pleasers,” he said.

### Unpopular decision

He further stated that Africa needed leaders who are firm and willing to make unpopular decisions and appropriately reward good and evil, and Africa needs leaders who do not conform to old systems and norms that add no value, Leaders who

would seek to understand the purpose of things rather than being focused on the means to fulfilling the purpose.

“Leaders who are disruptive to the norm and are innovative rather than conforming. We need Leaders who are not afraid of failure but are willing to pursue A vision that brings positive change, leaders who dare to win for their people,” he said.

Dlamini said many who led before were blind-sided and they have seen that in some instances conforming to what is against our culture and tradition has led to more

problems.

He said leadership is a personal responsibility, and it is a personal choice to make a difference.

“It begins at a personal level and knowing that things don’t just happen, it is people who make things happen. We must not look for solutions from outside, the solutions are already within. We must believe in ourselves,” he said.

The PM further urged Africans to be biased toward action and must act and act now. Be the change you want to see.

As I conclude, I will use words used by Kings and African Leaders. That we must borrow what is good from other cultures and leave what is not good.

We have always done the same in our traditions discarding what is not good and moving on with what is good. We need not hold on to anything that is not good, and we must define what is good for ourselves and not allow others to define it for us.

### Indicators

The PM shared that all indicators point to the fact that Africa has the largest land mass, Africa has huge reservoirs of untapped natural resources, and Africa is a youthful Continent with brilliant and resilient human resources naturally endowed with physical, emotional, and spiritual strength. “In 2022 it was estimated that 40 per cent of Africa’s population was 15 years old or younger, compared to the global average of 25 per cent. The future belongs to Africa. Africa is the future,” he said.

Furthermore, the PM shared that his encounter with the realities of life when working as a petrol attendant on his first job, fueled his will to get to university and acquire a degree. “I am grateful to my late dad for teaching my family and inculcating the culture of hard work. I am grateful to my mom for leading me to Christ, for my entire life has been characterised by my faith in Christ and hard work. God has been the source of strength in all my endeavours,” he said. He stated that the people of Africa are full of love, forgiveness, and tolerance.

“Africa is the future. The African sun is shining brighter and brighter than even the darkest shadow and the vilest of evil shall not dim this light. I will leave you with a question, what is your blueprint to be part of the great future that is Africa?” he concluded.



▲ The different leaders from different organisations who attended the summit.



▲ The Potter’s Wheel lead Pastor Kevin Ward, PM Russell Dlamini and the Minister of Commerce Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo at the summit.



# ‘I’m being crucified for having a baby with another woman’

By Bahle Gama  
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A rape suspect is claiming that the charge against him is birthed by his decision to have a child with another woman while in a sexual relationship with the complainant in question.

Mark Zwane, a student at Eswatini College of Technology (ECOT), through the representation of Sisho Magagula of SW Magagula Attorneys, moved an urgent bail application at the Magistrate’s Court on Thursday.

Zwane told the court that on February 14, he received a call from his friend identified as Seluleko Dlamini who informed him that he had important news to share.

Zwane who resides at Checkers said he left his place and proceeded to the ECOT campus to meet with his friend who informed him that there had been a report made at the police station and a warrant of his arrest had been issued.

When he inquired what the complaint was about, he was told that the complainant had filed a rape case against him at the police station and advised him to avail himself at the police station. “Frightened, I proceeded



▲ The High Court of Eswatini.

to the complainants’ dormitory within the campus to get more details about the information I had just received from Dlamini. I found her in her room and let her know I was aware of the allegations she had made against me,” he submitted.

Zwane said he tried to reason with the victim and asked her to explain why she had made such a report when the sexual activity that occurred between the two of them on November 22, 2023, had been consensual.

He stated that he further told the complainant that such news would be

prejudicial to him and yet to be born daughter because his pregnant girlfriend was due to deliver their first child at the time when he engaged in sexual intercourse with the complainant.

### Report

On February 17, Zwane opted to go to the police station to confirm the report, where upon arrival he was arrested and charged with contravening Section 3 of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act 15 of 2018.

Zwane reiterated that he was not guilty

because the act with the complainant was consensual.

“Both the complainant and I are in the third year, and we have been engaging in consensual sexual intercourse since the first year. Our open relationship is known to many of our colleagues at ECOT,” he submitted.

He stated that even after engaging in sexual intercourse in November, they had been in constant communication. Never at any point did she become hostile towards him which was evidence that their sexual intercourse was not forced.

Zwane further stated that when he went to confront the complainant in her dormitory, she brushed his back and told him, “Don’t worry. It’s going to be okay.”

“This was after she had even told me in the face that this criminal case against me was being vehemently pushed by her family and other people she did not mention,” he said.

The suspect said he was of the view that the complainant was bullied and pressured to press the rape charge against him in a crusade to tarnish his good name and punish him for having a child with another woman other than the complainant.

He said after his arrest, he called the complainant the following day and she rushed from church to the police station.

She tried to have the charges withdrawn but it was explained to them that charges bordering on the SODV Act are not withdrawable in the country.

The matter will be heard before a High Court Judge on Friday.



## 15-year-old raped by two men 2 days in a row

Stories by Nokunceda Magagula  
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TWO men have been arrested for raping a 15-year-old minor on two separate occasions, over a span of two days, at Nkalangeni.

According to both accused charge sheets the shocking incident occurred in the Nkalangeni area in the Hhohho region. The first incident took place on February 19, 2024, when Mcebo Matsebula (30) allegedly raped the minor. The second incident occurred on February 20, 2024, with Mlungisi Nkambule (19) being the alleged perpetrator. Both men are from the Nkalangeni area, and it is alleged that they did not use a condom during the rape.

Nkambule, the first accused, appeared before the court. According to the charge sheet, Nkambule is accused of engaging in an unlawful sexual act with the 15-year-old female juvenile, Lenhle\*, on February 20, 2024, at Nkalangeni.

This act is said to contravene Section 3(1) of the Sexual Offences and Violence Act of 2018. The charge sheet also states that Nkambule allegedly did not use a condom, thereby, exposing the minor to the risk of sexually transmitted infections. Furthermore, the victim was below the age of 18 at the time of the offence, rendering her incapable of fully understanding the sexual nature of the act.

During the Court proceedings, Nkambule elected to conduct self-defence. The prosecution requested that Nkambule’s blood specimen be taken for further investigation, and they also sought his remand in custody until March 1, 2024. Acting Principal Fikile Nhlabatsi, presiding over the case, granted the application and ruled that the accused should seek bail at the High Court.

Following Nkambule, Matsebula faced similar charges. The charge sheet also mentions that he allegedly did not use a condom during the offense. Matsebula was remanded in custody pending his committal to the high court on March 1, 2024. Meanwhile, in the same court, Mfanukhona Masuku was arrested and charged with assault after he assaulted his girlfriend with open hands and further threatened to murder her within 14 days.

According to his charge sheet, the incident occurred at Mahwalala on February 19, 2024. “On February 19, 2024, at Mahwalala area, the accused unlawfully assaulted Lucy\*, who is his girlfriend,” part of the charge sheet reads.

In Court, the accused pleaded guilty to the offence. He told the court that Lucy was the mother of his two children and that he never intended to assault her. However, some circumstances led him to perform the unlawful act.

Nhlabatsi sentenced the accused to pay a fine of E5 000 or spend 2 years in imprisonment. **\*Not real name**

## Man vows to ‘kill his brother’

A heated land dispute between two siblings has escalated to the point where death threats were exchanged, resulting in both brothers being arrested for assaulting each other.

Kenneth Mhlanga (50) appeared before Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi at the Mbabane Magistrate’s Court to face charges of assaulting his brother, Mashark Mhlanga (60), on February 15, 2024, in Maphalaleni.

According to the charge sheet, Kenneth allegedly used a slasher to strike Mashark on the head, causing a 2.5 cm deep wound. The Court heard the doctor’s report detailing the severity of the injury, the report mentioned that he also had wounds on his thighs. During the Court proceedings, Mashark pleaded guilty to contravening Section 77(1) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018. He provided his account of the incident, explaining that he and his brother shared land inherited from their mother, and they had built their homes as neighbours.

Mashark recounted that while he was herding his cows near Marshak’s maize field, his brother approached him and demanded that he stay away from the fields. Mashark claimed that Kenneth attacked him with a knobkerrie, striking him on the arm. In response, Kenneth defended himself by using the slasher to strike Mashark’s head.

Kenneth stated that his wife realised the fight between the brothers and arrived at the scene with a dog. He claimed that the dog bit Mashark, causing some of the bruises on his body. Kenneth asserted that he acted in self-defence, as his brother was the initial aggressor, and he only sought to protect himself from harm. He also mentioned suffering severe bruises from his brother’s attack, including bite marks.

Based on his guilty plea, Kenneth was found guilty as charged. In his mitigation statement, he emphasised that he has children in Forms 5 and 4 who depend



▲ Kenneth Mhlanga who assaulted his brother Mashark Mhlanga during his court appearance.

on him. Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi addressed the prevalence of domestic violence and violence within families, emphasising the need for a sentence that serves as a deterrent to others who might consider similar acts.

### Dangerous

“I foresee a dangerous situation between you and your brother. If left unchecked, it could result in one of you killing the other. It is my responsibility to ensure that does not happen,” said Nhlabatsi.

Consequently, Kenneth was sentenced to two years of imprisonment or a fine of E5 000. Marshark, who was also charged with assaulting Kenneth, was called to the stand. However, Magistrate Nhlabatsi decided to refer his case to another magistrate, given the escalating tensions between the brothers. Marshark was sternly warned to stay away from Kenneth.

In response, he uttered the words, “I swear I am going to kill that man,” which shocked and angered Magistrate Nhlabatsi. As a result, Marshark’s case was postponed to February 28, 2024.



3,500  
3,000

BUSINESS NEWS

+19.5%



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Nikkei parties like it's 1989; hits record high

SINGAPORE - Japanese stocks raced to a record peak on Thursday, breaking levels last seen in 1989 during the halcyon days of the bubble economy, as cheap valuations and corporate reforms lure foreign money looking for alternatives to battered Chinese markets.

The Nikkei share average rose about 2 per cent to 39,000 points, above the previous intraday record high of 38,957.44 points touched on the final trading day of 1989. On that day, the benchmark index closed at 38,915.87.

S.Africa to draw on contingency reserves

SOUTH Africa will evaluate the Gold and Foreign Exchange Contingency Reserve Account (GFECRA) held at the central bank annually and withdraw from it when funds are available, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana told Reuters on Thursday.

Godongwana said in his annual budget speech on Wednesday that the government was changing the framework governing the GFECRA account to allow it to draw down R150 billion (\$8 billion) over the next three years to limit its borrowing.

Botswana central bank holds policy rate

GABORONE -Botswana's central bank kept its main interest rate unchanged at 2.40 per cent in a decision announced on Thursday, and lowered its average inflation forecast for this year.

The country's economy is expected to operate below full capacity in the short term and therefore not generate demand-driven inflationary pressures, said Bank of Botswana Governor Cornelius Dekop. (Reuters)

ESCCOM ropes in stakeholders for the establishment, maintenance of towers

Stories By Silindzelwe Nxumalo  
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THE Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) joined hands with different stakeholders in the implementation of the guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of communication towers.

These are the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, the Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACAA), and the Eswatini Environmental Authority (EEA).

This was done through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the different ministries and parastatals for the implementation of the guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of communications towers.

Placement

ESCCOM Chief Executive (CE) Mvilawemphi Dlamini said the Commission realized that the process of tower siting or placement is not properly coordinated and, in some cases, raises concerns about the base stations being erected in inappropriate areas.

Dlamini stated that in some cases, a site can have several different towers erected by different service providers who could have shared the infrastructure, as the commission has enabled that through the infrastructure sharing legislation.

"This also has the potential to cause environmental concerns as well as interfering with



▲ The different partners and the ESCCOM CE posing for a picture after signing of the MoU

aviation operations; so, this exercise is very important to address these issues among others," he said.

The CE highlighted that the Commission identified the stakeholders to be part of a coordinated process where they seek to streamline processes about the placement of towers or antennas in the country to ensure that all relevant stakeholders give the necessary approvals when towers are to be erected around the country.

He explained that the purpose of this agreement is to ensure each stakeholder receives all applications for tower placement so that they make necessary considerations. The agreement also outlines the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the authorization process and the required commitment.

"I am proud of the product which our design-

nated working team has come up with and believe will be an effective tool towards achieving our goal," he said.

He added that this MoU signals their commitment towards the development of the country through infrastructure while assessing all relevant considerations before a tower is placed.

He further expressed his profound gratitude to all the partners in this agreement for their immense contribution and active participation during the MoU formulation process which began after the Commission issued the Guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of communications towers in 2022.

"The Commission is humbled by the level of commitment all the parties displayed from the inception of this project and throughout all its stages until today," he said.

BE's 11th Annual Labor Law Seminar oversubscribed

BUSINESS Eswatini (BE) has announced that their 11th Annual Labor Law Seminar under the theme 'Embracing Change in the Workplace' is now over-subscribed.

BE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) E. Nathie Dlamini said in a commitment to foster a deeper understanding of labour laws and to promote informed change and equitable workplaces they have this seminar annually.

Dlamini stated that this is the 11th Labour Law seminar they are convening and, consistent with all the years before it, it is also oversubscribed.

He explained that the over-subscription meant that their doors to the auditorium were now closed.

Installment

"We sincerely apologize to those who could not make it in on time. However, they shouldn't fret too much because there'll be another equally power-packed installment next year," he said.

The CEO stated that the oversubscription they see speaks to the quality of their offering which is unrivalled - year after year, and the popularity of their courses is based on unadulterated substance more than anything.

He highlighted that people who attend any of their courses come out completely changed and fully empowered to handle any challenges they may have at the workplace.

"Our formula of instruction, combined with our approach to delivering professional content, beautifully conspires to produce amazing results for attendees. We are even thinking of franchising this concept because it works wonders," said Dlamini.



▲ Business Eswatini CEO E.Nathie Dlamini.

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

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

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

The CEO explained that the seminar will have a particular focus on topics such as an evaluation of the Eswatini Collective Bargaining Framework, Constructive, Meaningful, and Informed Negotiation, Strikes and Lockout as well as the effectiveness of NEDLAC as a social dialogue forum lesson for Eswatini.

He stated that they will also look at the National Minimum Wage Debate where there will be an update of what employers have been working on so far, which will entail discussions on progress and the next steps.

Law

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

Business Eswatini has lined up experienced Industrial Relations expert and CEO of Employment Relations Exchange, Nerine Khan.

Khan has been actively involved in advising governments and organizations on formulating inclusive and sustainable wage policies.

Dlamini said joining Nerine on the podium for the seminar is Zweli Jele, a partner at Robinson Bertram who is also a heavy-hitter in advancing workers' rights and constructive employer-employee relationships.

He said attendees are guaranteed a thought-provoking session, which Jele is well-known for in the legal fraternity.

"In previous installments, he has well-articulated developments in relevant cases relating to matters of collective bargaining in the workplace among many others," said the CEO.

He further thanked everyone who supports Business Eswatini and the various projects they do for the business community and the country.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.5148	19.0211
G.B. Pound	23.4098	24.0938
EURO	20.0840	20.6911
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	





# Mavuso VVIP Box to get facelift

Stories By Silindzelwe Nxumalo  
silindzelwen@rubiconmedia.group

**ESWATINI** Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) has awarded a tender worth E5.7 million to Du-Van Developers (Pty) Ltd for Alterations of the Mavuso Trade Exhibition and Sports Centre VVIP Box.

According to the intention to award issued by ESPRA on their website, Du-Van Developers (Pty) Ltd was awarded the tender in terms of section 45 of the Public Procurement Act No. 7 of 2011 (the Act), following a competitive bidding process, and scored 87.06 per cent beating seven other tenderers.

“In terms of sections 45(4), 46, and 47 of the Act, all tenderers who submitted bids are hereby notified that a period of ten (10) working days is hereby allowed for the submission of any application

for review from the above-stated date of first publication of this notice,” read the intension.

According to the Request for Proposal (RFP), the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) is a Public Parastatal under Category A and is implementing the Alterations of the Mavuso Trade Exhibition and Sports Centre VVIP Box in Eswatini.

The RFP stated that the Authority invites suitably qualified building contractors registered with the Construction Industry Council Category (B1 and B2) only, for the proposed the Alterations of Mavuso Trade Exhibition and Sports Centre VVIP Box at Manzini.

The RFP stated that there was a compulsory briefing session on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024 starting at 10:00 am local time and the meeting place is Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini.

“Failure to attend the site inspection shall result in automatic disqualification,” reads part of the



▲ The entrance to the Mavuso Trade Exhibition and Sports Centre. The venue’s VVIP box is set for renovations.

RFP.

According to the RFP, the scope of works for the project entails the

alterations to the Mavuso Sports Centre VVIP Box including the demolition and removal of the

existing VVIP box, altering the current seating to the new VVIP box, and balustrading.



▲ Farmers being assisted at the NAMBoard stall.

THE National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBoard) will be hosting roadshows from February 21, 2024, which will provide a platform for much-needed face-to-face interactions with farmers, prospective farmers, and the youth.

According to the notice issued by the board, these roadshows will take place at respective packhouses in all four regions.

The interactions will focus on promoting farmer development initiatives with a particular focus on access to finance, production technologies, input supplies, market facilitation, and registration on the Eswatini Horticulture Information System (EHIS).

NAMBoard Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bhekizwe Maziya said they have noticed that they have been introducing several programs as a board. Each time they do the uptake of these products is always low.

Maziya stated that this uptake is always very low compared to their expectations which then leads to them concluding that they must do these road shows to educate.

## NAMBoard to host face-to-face sessions with farmers, prospective farmers, youth

“We are considering that we have introduced the Horticulture revolving fund, input-subsidy but the numbers of the successful farmers who have been successful remains very low, and these products have been introduced for a long time now for them to have low numbers,” he said.

### Questions

He also highlighted that there is also an issue of the questions they have been receiving from farmers and the public through public platforms like social media, they realised that several farmers are still not aware of the products we offer.

“This is therefore what has since informed the roadshows, say perhaps as NAMBoard we may think people already know about our services and products there are still people who don’t know about these services,” he said.

He stated that they will be using these



▲ Some of the farmers who attended the 1st roadshow in Shiselweni.

roadshows to get closer to the people especially farmers to create awareness of their services and products and help farmers increase the uptake of these services.

### Product

“When people are educated a product, they are better able to make a decision whether to take up the product or no, so that is the aim, which is to get close to our clientele and create awareness for all our products,” he said.

He added that this is also an opportunity for them to train farmers on other programmes including farmer development support, training provided by the board on farming, and how to get the right quality standards for imports.

“We will be training on the right quality standards required for export to allow for farmers to bring to us the right goods instead of having their products turned back,”

he said.

He further said that they will be using these as an opportunity to train and expose farmers to their new market information system so that they know how to access and update their data in the system.

Maziya explained that this will ensure that the utilization of the system is improved, and the capturing grows so that the ministry and the board get the right information.

The CEO stated that in the roadshows farmers can expect to have access to financial institutions, agro-dealers, and other service providers, and main markets for the farmers, ultimately making it a one-stop shop.

The roadshows started in the Shiselweni Region on Wednesday and will be followed by the Hhohho region.



# Nikkei parties like it's 1989; hits record high



▲ The Nikkei share average rose about 2 per cent to 39,000 points, above the previous intraday record high of 38,957.44 points touched on the final trading day of 1989.

SINGAPORE - Japanese stocks raced to a record peak on Thursday, breaking levels last seen in 1989 during the halcyon days of the bubble economy, as cheap valuations and corporate reforms lure foreign money looking for alternatives to battered Chinese markets.

The Nikkei share average rose about 2 per cent to 39,000 points, above the previous intraday record high of 38,957.44 points touched on the final trading day of 1989. On that day, the benchmark index closed at 38,915.87.

The 34 years it has taken to regain its footing is a record, too, for a major market and is a decade longer than Wall Street took to recoup losses from the 1929 crash and Great Depression.

"It is hard to overstate the psychological impact to Japanese people of the Nikkei returning, since a generation has never seen that level," said Richard Kaye, a Japan-based portfolio manager at Comgest.

"The magnetism of the market could draw in unforeseen amounts of domestic liquidity," he said.

The index is up almost 17 per cent this year after surging 28 per cent in 2023, when it was the best performing Asian major bourse. The tech-heavy Nasdaq, by comparison, soared 43 per cent last year and is up 6 per cent so far in 2024.

The Nikkei's rally has defied a recession in Japan, wars in Europe and the Middle East, a global inflation shock and rising rates worldwide. Trade exposure has helped insulate it from deteriorating domestic demand while a weak currency has boosted exporters' earnings.

The milestone also finally draws a line under decades of lacklustre performance that had kept global investors away.

Corporate governance changes in Ja-

pan are driving buybacks and unwinding cross-holdings, and foreigners are now spurring the rally with the likes of large investment from Warren Buffett in 2020 putting the spotlight on attractive valuations.

Foreign investors poured in 6.3 trillion yen

(\$42 billion) in the equity market last year. They spent a net 1.16 trillion yen in Japanese equities in January.

A robust earnings season and a falling yen, which is back near 150 per dollar level, as well as expectations that the Bank of Japan

will stick with ultra-easy monetary policy for a while yet have supercharged the market at the start of 2024. Bank of America's Asia fund manager survey for February showed "optimism on Japan remains unscathed." (Reuters)

## S.Africa to draw on contingency reserves when available – Minister

SOUTH Africa will evaluate the Gold and Foreign Exchange Contingency Reserve Account (GFECRA) held at the central bank annually and withdraw from it when funds are available, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana told Reuters on Thursday.

Godongwana said in his annual budget speech on Wednesday that the government was changing the framework governing the GFECRA account to allow it to draw down R150

billion (\$8 billion) over the next three years to limit its borrowing.

South Africa is struggling with an ailing economy and high debt ahead of a general election on May 29 that could see the governing African National Congress party lose its parliamentary majority for the first time since the end of apartheid 30 years ago.

Godongwana told Reuters that using the funds to reduce the country's debt liability was more effective than allocating them to spending.

(Reuters)



▲ South Africa's Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana speaks at a press conference ahead of his 2024 budget speech.

## Botswana central bank holds policy rate, sees steady inflation

GABORONE -Botswana's central bank kept its main interest rate unchanged at 2.40 per cent in a decision announced on Thursday, and lowered its average inflation forecast for this year.

The country's economy is expected to operate below full capacity in the short term and therefore not generate demand-driven inflationary pressures, said Bank of Botswana

Governor Cornelius Dekop.

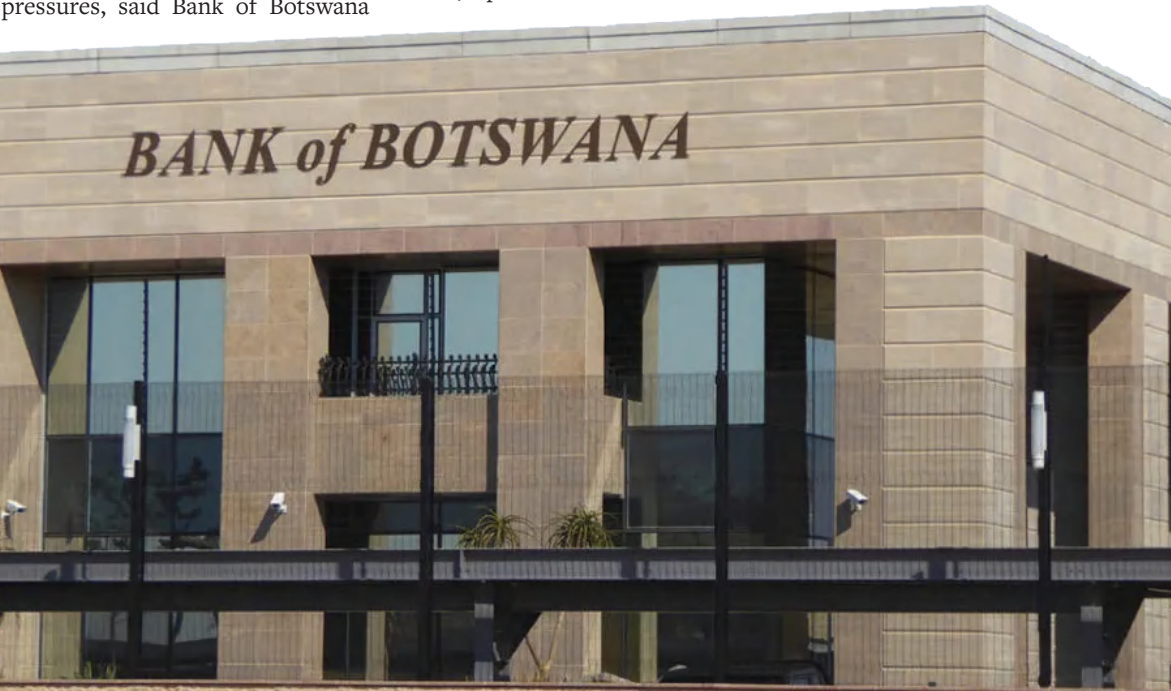
Inflation is seen averaging 4 per cent in 2024, he told a press conference, lower than the 4.9 per cent forecast for 2024 given in December because of lower expected inflation in Botswana's trading partners, weaker international commodity prices and a stronger local currency against the South African rand.

The bank lowered its policy rate to 2.40 per cent at its last monetary policy meeting in December.

Before that, the Monetary Policy Rate, based on a seven-day instrument, had been at 2.65 per cent for more than a year.

Inflation increased in January to 3.9 per cent year-on-year, from 3.5 per cent in December. February inflation was also expected to be 3.9 per cent, said Dekop.

(Reuters)



▲ Botswana's central bank kept its main interest rate unchanged at 2.40 per cent.



# Google suspends Gemini from making AI images of people ... after a backlash complaining it was ‘woke’

GOOGLE says it will fix Gemini, its answer to OpenAI’s GPT-4, after people complained the multi-modal AI model’s image-generating feature was “woke.”

On Thursday, the company said in a statement sent to Business Insider that it was pausing Gemini from generating AI images of people while it makes the changes.

Social media users have complained that Gemini was producing images of people of color in historically inaccurate contexts.

BBC News was one of the first outlets to report this.

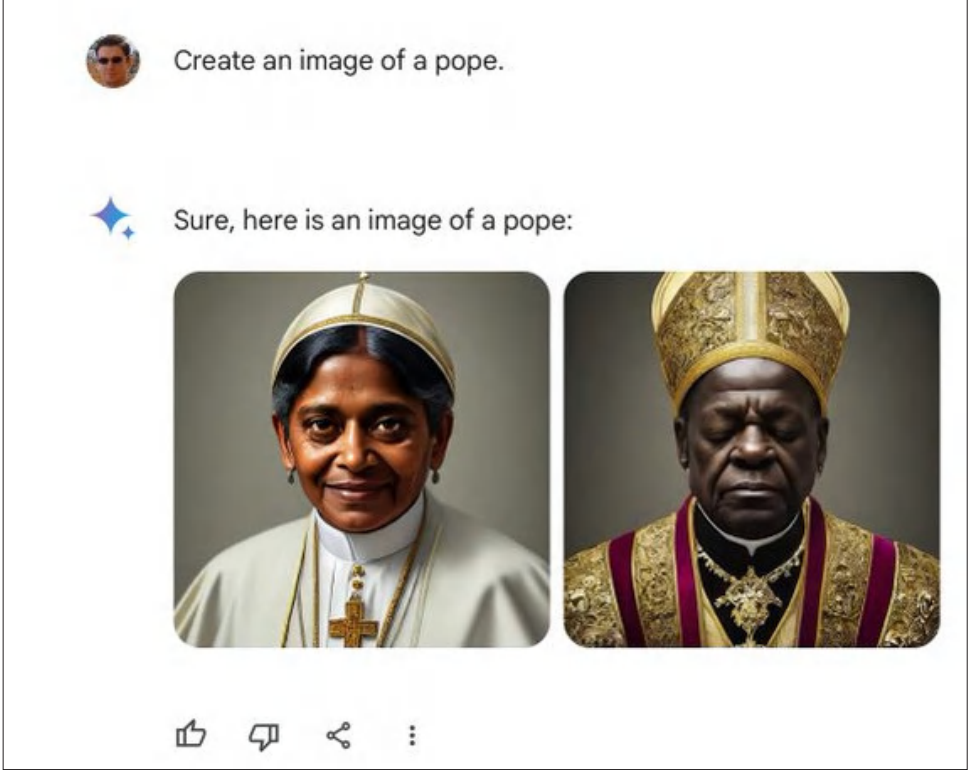
For example, software engineer Mike Wacker posted on X that a prompt to generate images of the Founding Fathers produced an image of a woman of color and, later, a man of color wearing a turban.

Others on X complained that Gemini had gone “woke,” citing instances where prompts regularly resulted in responses including the word “diverse.”

Debarghya Das, a computer scientist who used to work at Google, said on X that “it’s embarrassingly hard to get Google Gemini to acknowledge that white people exist.”

In a statement provided to Business Insider via email, a Google spokesperson said it was “working to improve these kinds of depictions immediately.”

The spokesperson highlighted the importance of generating images representing a diverse range of people, given Gemini’s global user base, but admitted that it’s “missing the



▲ Social media users have complained that Gemini was producing images of people of color in historically inaccurate contexts.

mark here.”

A post from Google on X acknowledged that Gemini was “offering inaccuracies in some historical image generation depictions.” In further comments released on Thursday, provided to BI by email, a Google

spokesperson said Gemini would temporarily pause the feature that generates images of people while the changes are made.

The spokesperson added that Google will “re-release an improved version soon.”

(Business Insider)

IN the face of South Africa’s worsening energy crisis, marked by increasingly severe power shortages, implementing daily electricity rationing has become imperative to avert the risk of a nationwide grid collapse.

According to the state-owned power generator Eskom, the country witnesses a significant power deficit, surpassing 6,000 megawatts on occasion.

This situation is similar in most African countries, thereby increasing the demand for solutions provided by clean tech startups across the continent.

In the latest development, three-year-old Hohm Energy, which connects homeowners and businesses with accredited solar installers, product suppliers, and embedded solar finance in South Africa, has raised \$8 million in seed investment.

The funding, whose first tranche of \$4.25 million came in Q4 2022, is the largest seed round for a tech startup in South Africa, according to Hohm Energy.

**Capital**

It was led by E3 Capital and 4DX Ventures, attracting participation from Breega, E4E Africa, Musha Ventures, Climate Capital Ventures, T.O.org, Tekton Ventures and Sunu Capital.

Hohm Energy says its solution was built as an alternative and sustainable energy source for over 7 million addressable households connected to South Africa’s national grid. Founded in 2021 by Tim Ohlsen and Emir Gluhbegovic, Hohm Energy runs a software and marketplace model connecting different stakeholders in the \$51 billion rooftop solar market value chain. The clean



▲ According to the state-owned power generator Eskom, the country witnesses a significant power deficit, surpassing 6,000 megawatts on occasion.

tech streamlines design, scheduling and procurement for installers while improving accessibility for buyers.

CEO Ohlsen, in an interview with TechCrunch, said the startup wants to empower homeowners to harness clean, renewable energy despite the challenges of navigating a complex industry with technical nuances and product choices.

**Investment**

“Purchasing a solar system can inevitably be a very costly investment. Our average order value ranges between \$8,000 [and] \$12,000. We have done extensive installations, too, so it is not something people haphazardly

decide on,” said Ohlsen. “It is something they take a lot of interest in, and it’s just a tough place for them to navigate. We do a lot of research so that when they come into the marketplace, we match them with a trusted solar installer, so they don’t have to worry about the quality of installation.”

The chief executive added that one of the startup’s strongest propositions is its “Home Ranger” feature. Each installation initiated through its marketplace is supervised by a Home Ranger who conducts a comprehensive assessment to ensure technical and legal compliance.

(TechCrunch)

## Nvidia has begun sampling two new AI chips for China

SAN FRANCISCO/BEIJING - Nvidia is currently offering customers samples of its two new artificial intelligence chips aimed at the China market, its CEO Jensen Huang said, in a bid to defend its market dominance in the country now threatened by U.S. export curbs.

“We’re sampling it with customers now. Both of them comply with the regulation without a license. We’re looking forward to customer feedback on it,” Huang told Reuters on Wednesday in an interview after releasing Nvidia’s quarterly results.

“We’re expecting that we’re... going to go compete for business, and hopefully we can serve the market successfully.”

Huang did not mention the names of the chips or the customers and Nvidia did not immediately respond to a request for clarification.

The chip industry newsletter, SemiAnalysis, reported in November that Nvidia was preparing to release three chips - H20, L20 and L2 - for the China market. The chips include most of Nvidia’s newest features for AI work, but have had some of their computing power cut back to comply with new U.S. rules, according to the newsletter’s analysis of the chips’ specifications.

Reuters reported earlier this month that Nvidia has started taking pre-orders for the H20 chip, the most powerful of the three chips aimed at the Chinese market, and its distributors were pricing it on par with a rival product from Huawei.

The H20 was originally expected to be released in November but has been delayed due to issues server manufacturers were having in integrating the chip, Reuters reported late last year.

Nvidia’s business in China took a hit after Washington expanded export control measures in October that included more restrictions on shipments of advanced Nvidia chips to China.

“This last quarter, our business significantly declined as we... stopped shipping in the marketplace (for China),” Huang said during the earnings call.

For the fiscal fourth quarter which ended on Jan. 28, Nvidia recorded sales of \$1.9 billion in the China market, which includes Hong Kong, according to Reuters calculations based on the company’s results.

That amounted to about 9% of total sales, down from 22% in the previous quarter when it reported \$4 billion in sales in the region.

“We expect this quarter to be about the same. But after that, hopefully, we can go compete for our business and do our best, and we’ll see how it turns out,” Huang said on the earnings call. (Reuters)





# We'll resolve SA's challenges by working together – Godongwana

**MINISTER of Finance Enoch Godongwana has called on South Africans – both citizens and private business – to work together with government to resolve the challenges the country faces.**

The minister was speaking during a post-Budget Speech discussion held in Cape Town on Thursday morning.

Key issues facing the economy In his Budget Speech on Wednesday, Godongwana highlighted electricity and logistics challenges as two of the key issues facing the economy.

“We need to work together to address these challenges. For instance, there are a number of business people who have come forward. Business associations have come forward with talent to work with government. Working with government in what is called the NECOM [National Energy Crisis Committee] to address the electricity challenges.

Roadmap  
“Building on that template, business has come forward, working with government. They developed what is called now the [Freight] Logistics Roadmap. We need, as South Africans

and even as government, not to be arrogant and accept solutions. Accept solutions from different people across the board,” he said.

Godongwana said on crime, government has brought in business “to work with us on how we can deal with crime”.

In a frank discussion regarding the country's challenges, the minister said government takes responsibility for some issues.

Government takes responsibility

“We have got challenges. The government has got to take the responsibility for some of these challenges. I can't say I'm happy with the fact that we've not been able to deal with the electricity challenge for 16 years. It is a fundamental flaw...which has cost the economy substantially,” he said.

The minister explained why National Treasury left most taxes – barring sin taxes and carbon tax – unchanged. He said solutions to broadening revenue lie elsewhere.

Broaden the tax base  
“Our tax strategy is to broaden the base than increasing taxes. If you...compare us to our peers, tax to GDP, we are not comparing favourably. So...



▲ Minister of Finance Enoch Godongwana has called on South Africans – both citizens and private business – to work together with government to resolve the challenges the country faces.

we should not be working hard to say how much should we tax people more. We should be saying how do we broaden that tax base. “There are a number of ways of doing it. And first, fun-

damentally, is to grow the economy. But we can only grow the economy if we bring in all of our solutions. And I think we can do it working together,” he said.

(Sunday world)



## Zambia bans maize exports over dry spell

**THE** Zambian government has imposed restrictions on maize and mealie meal (maize flour) exports in response to an extended dry spell endangering the harvest.

Minister of Agriculture Reuben Phiri announced the measure on Tuesday, stating that export limitations will remain until a thorough evaluation of the upcoming harvest is conducted.

“Owing to the prevailing situation, the government will continue to put the interest of the country above everything else. In this regard, it has restricted the export of maize grain and mealie meal,” the minister said.

He was delivering a ministerial statement in Parliament on the country's food security situation following the dry spell.

The government, he said, has since deployed defence personnel to guard all known smuggling routes, while security patrols and roadblocks are also being increased in districts prone to trafficking.

(Africa news)

## Zuma will have to account if ANC loses elections

# He took the spear and stabbed himself with it : Mbalula on Zuma and MK party

**AFRICAN National Congress (ANC) secretary-general Fikile Mbalula has taken another swipe at former president Jacob Zuma for leaving the governing party.**

Mbalula on Wednesday attended an ANC rally in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), ahead of the party's manifesto launch, which will be held at the Moses Mabhida Stadium over the weekend.

“Zuma never gave ANC two-thirds majority”

Addressing ANC supporters, Mbalula criticised Zuma for backing the new uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party.

“We are fighting in court and you will hear that it is the end of it soon,” he said in reference to the trademark dispute between the ANC and MK party.

The case will reportedly be heard by the Electoral Court on 19 March.

The ANC secretary-general said “those who are lost will come back”.

“Those who want to go, we are not going to force them to stay. They can leave, but you will come back my child. The ANC will always be here in South Africa, it is not going anywhere,” Mbalula said.

ALSO READ: MK ‘a threat to ANC’ as 10% of election vote predicted for Zuma-backed party

Mbalula also shrugged off the MK party's target of a two-thirds majority in this year's national and provincial elections before taking another swipe at Zuma, who was suspended by the ANC last month.

“I hear people say they want a two-thirds majority, but how will you get it when you never gave us. If you want a two-thirds ma-

jority you have to have the trust of all South Africans.

“We last had a two-thirds majority with Thabo Mbeki. We haven't gotten it since. This two-thirds majority will come from the African National Congress.”

Mbalula said the ANC had not expected “Msholozi, a father who grew up in this struggle and worked for this liberation” to abandon the party.

“He did something that has never been seen in the struggle. You can't, as a veteran like him, say that I'm leaving the party.”

The ANC secretary-general urged members not to “fight with anyone or be violent”.

“We are not jealous, we don't have hate and we are reviving the African National Congress.”

### ‘Enemy is rejoicing’

Mbalula further dismissed Zuma's claims of fixing the ANC from the outside by supporting the MK party.

“He took the spear and stabbed himself with it. You can't leave to work with the enemy and then say you are fixing the ANC. The enemy is happy, the enemy has never loved us [and] the enemy is rejoicing.

“They want us divided so that they can infiltrate us. When we are divided, when we are done killing each other, they will take the country and take it wherever they want to take it. That's not a struggle.

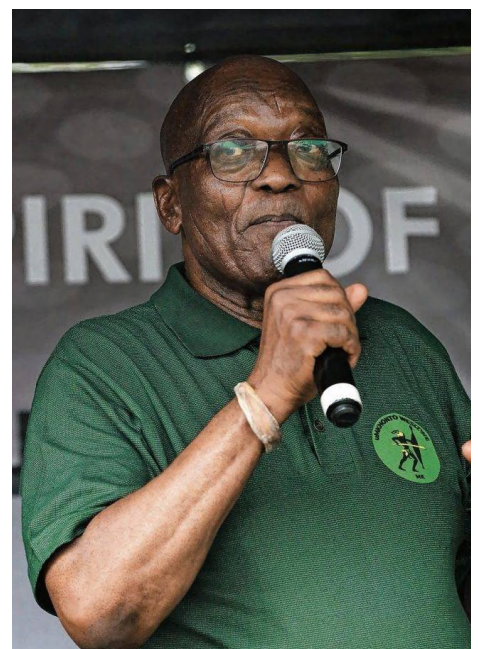
WATCH: ANC ‘ready to defend itself’ if Zuma goes to court

“There's no [household] without problems. You can go with something you don't know, when you get there you will find that it is worse than what you left behind.

“It is the same as leaving your wife in the house and go look for another woman, leav-



▲ African National Congress (ANC) secretary-general Fikile Mbalula has taken another swipe at former president Jacob Zuma for leaving the governing party.



ing the right person in the house. The movement has always had problems, challenges, but you don't desert the movement. We will die here in the African National Congress,” Mbalula continued.

### ‘Zuma had his time’

The ANC secretary-general emphasised that Zuma's time was over, saying “leaders come and go”.

“Msopholozu had his time, we fought for him, placed him in the Union Buildings [despite] his charges and made him president of this country.

“After nine years, a new president came in... [Cyril] Ramaphosa's tenure will also

come to an end and another president will come on, but no matter what happens the African National Congress will stay.

“Leaders come and go, but the ANC must remain and that's what important. You don't leave the ANC because you have problems. Also us, we have problems, who doesn't have problems? Who will solve those problems? We will solve those problems.”

Mbalula claimed that people joined the MK party because they want positions in Parliament and provincial legislatures.

“They want to be in charge on all sides,” he added.

(The Citizen)



# Biden calling Putin a ‘crazy SOB’ debases US – Kremlin

THE Kremlin on Thursday condemned President Joe Biden for calling Vladimir Putin a “crazy SOB,” after Biden criticized the Russian president and referred to him as one of the key threats to humanity after climate change.

At a fundraiser in San Francisco on Wednesday evening, Biden said: “We have a crazy SOB like that guy Putin and others and we always have to worry about nuclear conflict, but the existential threat to humanity is climate,” according to Reuters.

The off-the-cuff remarks drew strong condemnation from Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, who told Reuters that the “use of such language” by a head of state won’t affect Putin but it “debases those who use such vocabulary.”

Peskov attacked Biden’s choice of words as likely an attempt to “look like a Hollywood cowboy” but said, “honestly I don’t think it’s possible.”

The Kremlin spokesperson asked if Putin had ever used “one crude word” to address America before adding that such language was a disgrace for the U.S.

Peskov wasn’t the only one to criticize Biden’s remarks. Former Russian President and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev wrote on X: “As opposed to what the US president has said, the existential threat is not climate; but the useless old geezers, like Biden himself, who have become senile and are ready to start war against Russia.”

Tangent  
Aside from taking a shot at Putin, Biden also commented on former president and Republican frontrunner Donald



▲ US president Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin (Below).

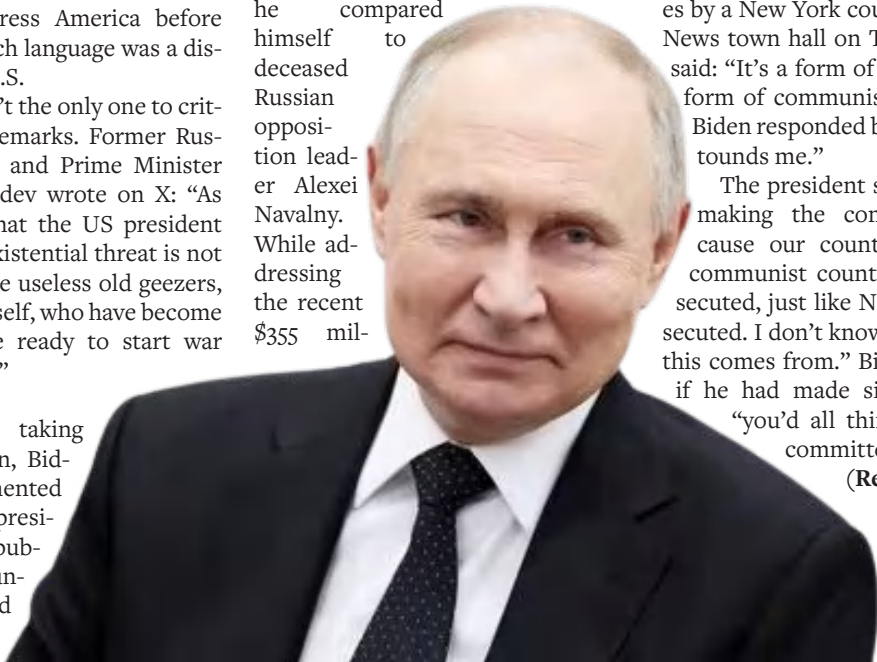
Trump’s recent comments in which he compared himself to deceased

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. While addressing the recent \$355 mil-

lion fine levied against his businesses by a New York court during a Fox News town hall on Tuesday, Trump said: “It’s a form of Navalny. It is a form of communism or fascism.” Biden responded by saying: “It astounds me.”

The president said Trump was making the comparisons “because our country’s become a communist country, he was persecuted, just like Navalny was persecuted. I don’t know where the hell this comes from.” Biden added that if he had made similar remarks, “you’d all think I should be committed.”

(Reuters)



# UK parly descends into chaos over Gaza ceasefire vote

UK lawmakers called Wednesday for a temporary ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, but only after dozens walked out of the House of Commons in protest at how the vote was handled.

Lawmakers had been debating three separate resolutions related to the war. All were largely symbolic and not binding on the government.

But Parliament descended into chaos as legislators from the governing Conservatives and an opposition party accused Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle of upending parliamentary procedure. The mayhem broke out during debate on a motion from the opposition Scottish National Party, or SNP, urging an immediate ceasefire, the release of all Israeli hostages held by Hamas and “an end to the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.”

The main opposition Labour

Party, which is divided over how strongly to criticize Israel, submitted a tweaked version of the motion calling for an “immediate humanitarian ceasefire,” and without the mention of collective punishment.

Rishi Sunak’s governing Conservatives put forward their own amendment, which backed an “immediate humanitarian pause,” followed by “moves towards a permanent sustainable” ceasefire. The government says a ceasefire can only happen if Hamas frees all Israeli hostages and relinquishes control of Gaza.

When Hoyle allowed votes on all three, Conservative lawmakers were furious, saying it went against House of Commons conventions. Some accused Hoyle — who was elected as a Labour lawmaker before taking up the neutral post of speaker — of favoring the opposition.

(Reuters)



▲ Britain’s Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks during the weekly session of Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons, in central London.

# Dutch PM Rutte in strong position to become NATO chief

BRUSSELS/LONDON: The United States and Britain backed outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Thursday to succeed Jens Stoltenberg as the next secretary general of NATO, putting him in a strong position to clinch the post.

Stoltenberg’s successor when he steps down in October will take office at a crucial juncture, tasked with sustaining NATO members’ support for Ukraine’s costly defense against Russia’s invasion while guarding against any escalation that would draw the alliance directly into a war with Russia.

“President Biden strongly endorses PM Rutte’s candidacy to be the next Secretary General of NATO,” a US official said.

“PM Rutte has a deep understanding of the importance of the Alliance, is a natural leader and communicator, and his leadership



▲ Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte attends a European Union summit in Brussels, Belgium.

would serve the Alliance well at this critical time.”

Depending on the outcome of November’s US presidential elec-

tion, the next NATO boss may have to deal with a second term for Donald Trump, who recently once again called into question his com-

mitment to defending NATO allies.

NATO leaders are appointed by consensus requiring the support — or at the least no opposition — from all its 31 members. Two diplomats said Rutte has the backing of about 20 NATO members so far.

Sweden is currently set to become the Western alliance’s 32nd member — a move precipitated by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Rutte, who was already considered the favorite to fill the role, signaled his interest in the top job at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization last year.

The British Foreign Office said Rutte was a well-respected figure across NATO with serious defense and security credentials, and someone who would ensure it remained strong and prepared for any need to defend itself.

The Netherlands’ longest-serving leader, Rutte unexpectedly announced his departure from Dutch

politics in July, but remains in post as a caretaker leader while coalition negotiations continue following a Nov. 22 election.

Stoltenberg, a former Norwegian prime minister, has served as NATO chief since 2014. His term was extended in July last year for a fourth time as the alliance opted to stick with an experienced leader rather than try to agree on a successor with Russia’s war in Ukraine raging on NATO’s doorstep.

Diplomats say Rutte is currently the only official candidate for the post. Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas and Latvian Foreign Minister Krisjanis Karins have also signaled interest but not been presented formally as candidates, diplomats say. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen of Denmark, whom some had mentioned as a possible successor, ruled it out on Thursday, saying she would turn down the job if it were offered to her.

(Reuters)





# AY' MOS le-weekend i-blind!

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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IT is the Aymos weekend.

South African talented vocalist Aymos is headlining arguably the biggest event in Eswatini this weekend, not to look down on the Bassie event at Lawu Le Ngwenya. Enjoy your gig guide read, as prepared by Eswatini Daily News.

▶▶ LOVE & LAUGHTER  
When: Friday  
Where: Happy Valley  
Fee: E150

Set to be headlined by the renowned Simunye Church Boy, this annual Valentine's show promises to be a night filled with humour, joy, and unforgettable performances. Scheduled to take place at Happy Valley Hotel, Love & Laughter aims to kickstart the year with a delightful blend of comedy and entertainment. Simunye Church Boy, a sought-after comedian known for his unique approach that intertwines his Christian faith with his craft, is set to take centre stage and captivate the audience with his witty humour and relatable anecdotes.

Joining Simunye Church Boy on this laughter-filled night will be Eswatini's beloved comedy duo, Bongiswa & Darren.

With their hilarious social media skits and a nod to the legendary radio duo, Mbhokane and S'gcos'yanca, this dynamic pair is sure to leave the audience in stitches. However, stealing the spotlight with his undeniable talent and infectious energy is Mdura. Bursting onto the Eswatini comedy scene in 2015, Mdura quickly made a name for himself in the 'LOL' comedy competition.

▶▶ MATAMZA & FRIENDS  
When: Friday  
Where: Ekhayeni Chillaz  
Fee: E50

Excitement is brewing as South African DJ and traditional healer, Gogo Skhotheni, is set to grace the stage at local DJ Matamza's upcoming event at Ekhayeni Chillaz. Scheduled for Friday, this event promises a unique blend of music and endless vibes. Joining Gogo Skhotheni on the lineup is the renowned DJ Yeka, Amapiano artist Malemon and the event's headliner, Matamza. The night will also feature an array of talented supporting acts including Zulu D,

Sgitha, The Bishops, Sbu Drum DJ, Bavarah, Tilungu, Mixmash, Black Pearl, Fantasy, Expo, Drum Rhythm, and Resident DJ.

▶▶ ZIZA MUFTIC  
When: Friday  
Where: Jazz Gallery  
Fee: E350

Talented Croatian-born musician, Ziza Muftic is set to mesmerize fun-loving music enthusiasts at the Mountain View International Hotel in Mbabane. This event, organized by The Jazz Gallery, aims to celebrate 20 years of showcasing the finest regional jazz and exquisite music. In a recent social media post, The Jazz Gallery expressed excitement, stating, "We are thrilled to kick off 2024 with this truly amazing offering. Ziza Muftic will finally grace The Jazz Gallery stage, and we just can't wait!" Ziza Muftic will be accompanied by a talented band, including Amaeshi Ikechi on the upright bass and David Cousins on the base, enhancing the magic of her performance. Ziza Muftic is a multifaceted artist, renowned as a jazz vocalist, educator, pianist, and composer.

▶▶ EZAMZUKWANA VINTAGE PARTY  
When: Saturday  
Where: Mega Lounge  
Fee: E150

Fun lovers should prepare themselves for an unforgettable night of Amapiano magic as South African sensation Aymos takes centre stage at Mega Lounge for the highly anticipated 'Ezam'zukwana Vintage Party'. With an impressive lineup of talented artists, this event promises to be a celebration of music, style, and nostalgia. Joining Aymos on stage will be a stellar line-up of performers, including Selector, Tap Tap, Virus, Yeka DJ, and the Mega Lounge All-Stars. The master of ceremonies for the evening will be the charismatic Buhle, ensuring that the party atmosphere remains electric throughout the night. To add to the excitement, the dress code for the event is vintage clothing, allowing attendees to showcase their unique style and pay homage to the timeless fashion of the past.

▶▶ IZENZO KA BASSIE  
When: Saturday  
Where: Lawu Le Ngwenya  
Fee: E80

"Umuntu ok'thandayo umbona ngezenzo?" That tune will revert at Lawu Le Ngwenya, which will be the playground of South African Amapiano sensation,

Bassie, who is prepared to grace its stage with an electrifying performance. The show dubbed 'Izenzo ka Bassie' promises to be an unforgettable experience for fans and music enthusiasts alike. Bassie, whose fame skyrocketed with her hit song 'Izenzo' featuring Aymos, has captivated millions of listeners worldwide. With over 13 million views on YouTube the song, her music has become an anthem. The event will also feature performances from Wassabee, Best Duo, DJ KMaster, Lungsta Da Deepsta, DJ So What, Track Soul, Nimza and DJ Sleep among others.

▶▶ AFRO HOUSE RELOADED  
When: Saturday  
Where: Zhumiao Lounge  
Fee: Free

Fun lovers will be mind-blown as the highly anticipated Afro-House Reloaded event descends upon Piggs Peak, Zhumiao Lounge and Lifestyle Centre. The 'Chomzin and Friends' event is gearing up to captivate fun lovers with a lineup that is nothing short of electrifying, promising an unforgettable night of music, dance, and pure excitement. Headlining the event is the sensational Chomzin, who will be joined by a stellar cast of performers including the dynamic Stixdagod, the incomparable DJ Mshayi, the sensational DJ Phara, the magnetic DJ Biggie, and the charismatic MC, Gorbachev. Guests are encouraged to dress to impress in an all-black ensemble, adding a touch of sophistication to the already buzzing atmosphere. And here's the cherry on top - entry to the event is free, ensuring that everyone can partake in the festivities. However, outside drinks are a no-go, but fret not as delectable food will be available for purchase on-site. For those looking to elevate their experience, vapour rentals will be available for E100.

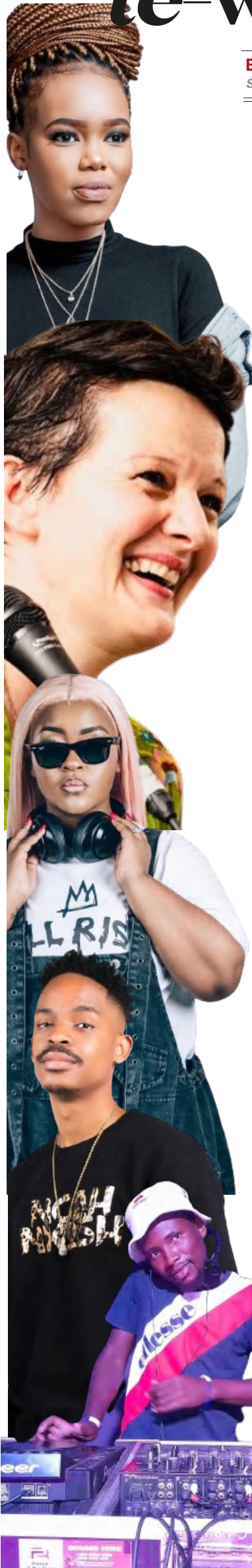
▶▶ MISTOSOUL & FRIENDS  
When: Saturday  
Where: Ehawini Lifestyle  
Fee: Free

An amazing series coming to an end! Ehawini Lifestyle is preparing to host the highly anticipated season finale of 'Mistosoul & Friends', promising an evening of music, entertainment, and

celebration. The grand finale will see Mistosoul headlining the event. Joining Mistosoul on stage will be a lineup of exceptional artists including Crooks, Wicked, Its All Blaq, MBO, and Cybos, all poised to deliver electrifying performances that will entice the audience. The 'Mistosoul & Friends' season finale will be a culmination of talent, passion, and community spirit, bringing together music lovers from near and far to celebrate the artistry and creativity of local musicians. With a diverse lineup of performers and an atmosphere of camaraderie and joy, the event is poised to be a fitting conclusion to a remarkable series that has captured the hearts of many. It is important to note that the event is exclusively open to individuals aged 18 and above, creating a vibrant and mature atmosphere for attendees to immerse themselves in the music.

▶▶ SIBEBE SOUL SUNDAY  
When: Sunday  
Where: Ehawini Lifestyle  
Fee: Free

Ehawini Lifestyle and Sibebe Premium Lager are proud to present the highly anticipated third edition of Ehawini Soul Sundays, now aptly renamed 'Sibebe Soul Sundays' which will feature local vocalist, Sethu. Attendees at Ehawini Lifestyle can prepare to indulge in the ultimate sensory experience as they sip on their favourite home-brewed premium lager while being serenaded by a soulful live band. Headlined by Eswatini vocalist, Sethu, the event promises an unforgettable evening filled with soulful melodies, good vibes, and an opportunity to win exciting prizes. The stage will come alive with the enchanting voice of Sethu, one of the country's most talented vocalists. Accompanied by a band, Sethu's performance is sure to leave the audience yearning for more. Attendees will have the chance to participate in various contests and activities, with plenty of prizes up for grabs.





# Kabza De Small to kill 't at Ocean Cuisine

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

SOUTH African Amapiano record producer, Kabza De Small, who is often referred to as the 'King of Amapiano,' will entertain groove lovers at Ocean Cuisine in Manzini.

Scheduled for March 28, 2024, the 'Balcony Groove with Kabza De Small', promises a musical experience that will send fun lovers to a frenzy.

Playing alongside him on stage will be a stellar lineup of local talents including Zulu D, Sbu De Drum DJ, Twenty 11, The Bishops, Paris, Culolam, Fantasy, Maphi, and Lady Zee, with the charismatic TK as the host of the evening.

For attendees coming through before 9 pm, tickets will be priced at E150 for general admission and E250 for VIP access, with prices rising to E200 for general admission and E300 for VIP thereafter. Attendees are encouraged to dress in smart casual attire to complement the vibrant atmosphere of the event. Kabelo Motha, better known as Kabza De Small, has made a significant impact in the Amapiano genre, both as a solo artist and as one-half of the dynamic duo, Scorpion Kings, alongside DJ Maphorisa. With international recognition stemming from hits like 'Umshove' in 2018 and the diamond-



▲ Amapiano DJ Kabza De Small will perform at Ocean Cuisine.

selling LP 'Scorpion Kings' in 2019, Kabza De Small has solidified his status as a trailblazer in the music industry. Having garnered numerous accolades, including 10 SAMA awards, two Mzansi Viewers' Choice

awards, three Amapiano Music Awards, and a Sunday Times GenNext award, Kabza De Small continues to push boundaries with his latest chart-topping track, 'Imithandazo', featuring Young Stunna and Mthunzi.

## Mashata to headline All-White Party

PREPARE for a night of glamour, music, and pure entertainment as South African DJ Mashata takes centre stage at the highly anticipated 'All-White Party' to be held at The Gardens in Fairview.

Scheduled for March 10, 2024, starting from noon until the late hours, this event promises to be a sensational affair exclusively tailored for senior citizens looking to dance the night away in style.

Joining Mashata on the decks will be the talented DJ Wicked, DJ MBO, and Karly, ensuring a diverse and electrifying musical experience for all attendees. Adding to the festivities will be the hilarious comedian Ndosh, who will serve as the master of ceremonies for the evening.

With an entrance fee of E100, guests can expect a night filled with laughter, good vibes, and unforgettable music. Mashata, known for his expertise in Soul & RnB, as well as his engaging stage presence, has captivated audiences with his unique blend of humour and vibrant energy.

As a love language DJ, broadcaster, and professional MC, Mashata has solidified his reputation as a multifaceted entertainer who knows how to keep the crowd on their feet and fully engaged.

He is also known as a good comedian,



▲ South African DJ Mashata to headline the All White Party.

who is both charismatic and has wit. Attendees should not miss out on this exclusive opportunity to experience the magic of Mashata live at the 'All-White Party' at the Gardens. They should be ready to dance, laugh, and create lasting memories at this one-of-a-kind event that promises to be a night to remember.

## DJ Citie, Mshiza Mnguni's new single on the way

LOCAL music producer DJ Citie and the talented Mshiza Mnguni are preparing to unveil their latest musical masterpiece, a single titled 'December', from their upcoming Extended Play (EP).

Scheduled for release on March 28, 2024, 'December' will be available on all major digital platforms, offering listeners a taste of traditional Afro sounds expertly crafted by DJ Citie. The song narrates a heartwarming tale of a young man expressing his desire to marry a special lady to his parents, despite their initial reservations. The song captures the essence of love, determination, and the beauty of a unique cultural narrative.

### Creative

Describing the creative process behind 'December', DJ Citie shared that it was an exciting experience as they wanted to create a love song with a traditional twist. He said the song started with him playing with chords and melodies, with Mshiza Mnguni hymning some harmonies. He said after recording the hook, they wanted to feature someone on the verse but then decided to keep the song concise and feature-free, to make it short and sweet.

As a birthday gift to himself, DJ Citie will mark the release of 'December' on his special day. He urged music lovers in Eswatini to show their support by streaming the song and embracing the artistry of local musicians.

Additionally, DJ Citie revealed that they have a new initiative, YC Entertainment, dedicated to nurturing and promoting Eswatini's talent in the music industry. The movement, founded by DJ Navie and DJ Citie, aims to provide a platform for emerging artists such as Mshiza Mnguni, Histo, Q.Base, Stella Jacobs, ProRBS, JimmyBoy, ParisWorld, and Danie Lanser to showcase their creativity and passion for music.



▲ DJ Citie and Mshiza Mnguni are set to drop a new single titled 'December'.



A year ago, the controversial influencer DJ Cyan Boujee was featured on MacG's Podcast and Chill, where she shared details about the lifestyle, BBL surgery, Busta 929, and her pregnancy, which she ultimately terminated. The Cyan Boujee episode received 1.5 million views.

After a video of Cyan Boujee twerking for schoolchildren went viral, MacGyver Mukwevho, better known by his stage name MacG, called Cyan a prostitute in a recent episode that aired this week.

At the time, it was said that Cyan Boujee, whose real name is Honour Zuma, had been called in to inspire the schoolchildren, but she was later caught twerking for them.

The video draws huge reaction

People's reactions to the video differed when it appeared on various social media sites. Some questioned what kind of school hired someone like her to inspire learners. Cyan responded to MacG on her Instagram stories, teasing both his fiancé and co-host, Sol Phenduka.

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# War of words between Cyan Boujee, MacG takes ugly turn



▲DJ Cyan Boujee on MacG's Podcast and Chill.

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eo differed when it appeared on various social media sites. Some questioned what kind of school hired someone like her to inspire learners.

Cyan responded to MacG on her Instagram stories, teasing both his

fiancé and co-host, Sol Phenduka.

"That squirrel-looking thing laughing out loud at the fact that I am out on school tours is okay, but calling me a prostitute for views is where you draw the line," she wrote. "Your wife, who looks 20 years older than you, is the actual prostitute. Have your opinion about me, but don't swear at me, then come back to smile in my face."

She went on to say that MacG, a premium hater who despises every up-and-coming artist in the game, is receiving support from people.

Cyan, who is thought to be 22 years old, implied that she had made 10 times as much in a year as MacG had. She asked MacG to continue to hold a high regard for her, citing the fact that she ranked among the top five guests he had ever had on his podcast.

"I do not want to talk about that dark, blobby fish fat man; he is just a puppet gaining coins from this, and I will be stooping 100 times low." (Sunday World)



## Blxckie to join Bas' US tour

**RAPPER, singer and songwriter Sihle Sithole, professionally known as Blxckie, is making major moves.**

Blxckie has been confirmed as one of the acts that will join American artist Bas at his upcoming US tour this March.

Real name Abbas Hamad, Bas is a Sudanese-American rapper who is signed to J. Cole's Dreamville Records.

The 2024 North America tour will be in support of his newly released fourth album We Only Talk About Real Shit When We're Fucked Up. It will kick off on March 3 at House of Blues in Dallas, US.

The 23-city tour is produced by Live Nation. It will make stops in Los Angeles, Toronto, Atlanta, and more cities. The tour will wrap up in New York at Irving Plaza on April 9.

Blxckie has shared that his musical interest started as an 8-year-old when he started recording music with his friends.

He enrolled at the University of KwaZulu-Natal to pursue a degree in Psychology. However, his studies were disrupted by the

Covid-19 lockdown.

He is well known for his songs such as Ye x4, where he features Nasty C. The single was certified double platinum.

Blxckie has received a roaring response to his debut album, debut studio album B4Now, released in May 2021. His follow up EPs and subsequent music releases received similar acclaim. This has led to him receiving countless award nominations, award wins, and global recognition.

In 2022, rapper KO, real name Ntokozo Mdluli, featured Young Stunna and Blxckie in his hugely successful single, Sete.

With over 14-million streams across Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube Music and Deezer, Sete was the number one song of 2022.

According to the Recording Industry of SA (Risa) then, Sete sat at number one. Nigerian superstar Burna Boy's Last Last came second. This was on the Official SA Charts list of South Africa's most streamed songs of 2022.

(Sunday World)

## Heartbreak as Lerato Kganyago experiences another miscarriage

**TELEVISION and radio personality Lerato Kganyago-Ndlala, who is dubbed the queen of Valentine's Day, has revealed heartbreaking news.**

The radio personality took to her Instagram page on Wednesday evening to reveal to her fans and followers that she was pregnant but unfortunately had a miscarriage.

"Pardon my silence, this was the happiest but became a painful part of this month of love. I am strong, and I will never give up," she wrote. She shared that on February 12, her gynaecologist broke the shattering news to her, adding that she is now feeling much better than a week ago, and that her parents have been next to her to provide support.

"Thank you to those that have been checking up on me, I was so hopeful."

She also thanked her colleagues, bosses, family, and friends for the support that they have given her.

The media personality has openly shared her struggles to have her own kids. Following

a fourth miscarriage, she wrote about her difficulties becoming pregnant in 2021.

"I was pregnant. I'm sure you guys saw that I was really big ... Then I had a miscarriage. Yes, I had a miscarriage this year again [2021]. It was my fourth miscarriage," she wrote at the time.

At the time, she was reportedly over three months pregnant when she lost her baby.

"I think I was three-four months pregnant, but unfortunately, I lost my baby. Life goes on.

"This is something that I didn't want to discuss, but since we're having an honesty night ... I was looking forward to this pregnancy.

"I thought this time around that I had made it through because I had been trying so hard for a while."

This year, the Metro FM presenter has seemingly blue-ticked the day of love.

Due to people's curiosity about what she would be doing on Valentine's Day, she was trending throughout the day.

(Sunday World)



▲Media personality Lerato Kganyago.





ALTHOUGH some of the signs and symptoms of gout are concerning, it's not a contagious disease. Also, it may run in families, but it's impossible to pass gout from one person to another.

Gout is a type of arthritis known for causing pain and inflammation in one joint before it may affect another. The big toe is one of the most commonly affected parts of the body. Gout may also cause severe redness and heat along with pain and swelling.

Due to some of the symptoms of gout, and with the toes often affected, many people wonder if this condition is contagious. They may also wonder if gout is curable or dangerous. Arthritis itself isn't a contagious condition.

#### Can gout be spread to other people?

Gout isn't a contagious condition, and you can't pass it to other people. It results from a buildup of uric acid, an internal complication.

Gout is a type of inflammatory arthritis, a group of joint conditions characterised by swelling, pain, and stiffness in your joints. It's also considered the most common form of inflammatory arthritis. In addition, gout is in a subcategory of inflammatory arthritis called crystalline arthritis.

Most types of arthritis aren't contagious. As well as gout, these include other common forms, such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

One exception is infectious arthritis. Also called septic arthritis, this is a serious, acute condition resulting in an infected joint. It's due to a bacterial infection. Although the arthritis itself isn't contagious, the underlying bacteria can transmit to other people.

Also, while both gout and infectious arthritis usually affect one joint at once, these aren't the same condition.

#### Can you pass away from gout?

Without treatment or management, gout may reduce your quality of life. But it's not fatal.

Some of the risk factors for gout, however, may lead to life threatening complications without treatment. These include certain chronic conditions, like:

- ▶ chronic kidney disease
- ▶ congestive heart failure
- ▶ diabetes

#### Is gout dangerous?

Gout isn't fatal, but it may involve reduced mobility. The pain in your affected joints may become so intense that you aren't able to stay active or participate in everyday activities.

Also, while you can manage inflammation from gout with treatment, untreated gout can increase your chance of damaged joints. Such damage is irreversible and may further affect your quality of life.

#### What causes gout?

Gout results from excess uric acid (hyperuricemia). Uric acid production is a normal function of the body, and it's important in breaking down purines from certain foods you eat. But when your body

produces too much uric acid, it can form into painful crystals in your joints.

Eating a high purine diet is one risk factor for hyperuricemia and gout. Such foods include organ meats, red meat, and seafood.

Other risk factors for hyperuricemia and subsequent gout include:

- ▶ high blood pressure (hypertension)
- ▶ obesity
- ▶ diabetes
- ▶ metabolic syndrome
- ▶ kidney problems
- ▶ heart disease
- ▶ alcohol consumption
- ▶ excess fructose in your diet
- ▶ diuretics or certain immunosuppressants
- ▶ your sex (being male)
- ▶ a family history of gout
- ▶ conditions of high cell turnover, such as psoriasis

Although gout is due to hyperuricemia, not everyone with high uric acid levels develops this arthritis. Notably, 80% of people with hyperuricemia don't develop gout.

Environmental factors are also possible contributors to gout, according to one 2022 review. Researchers are looking at factors like air pollution and significant temperature changes as possible risk factors when

combined with genetics and personal health history.

#### What are the symptoms of gout?

As an inflammatory type of arthritis, gout causes severe pain and swelling in the affected joints. Unlike other types of inflammatory arthritis, gout usually affects one joint.

Although the big toe is the most common site affected, gout can also affect your other toes, your ankles, and your knees. Gout can also cause the affected joints to become red and feel hot. The pain is intense, and it often gets worse at night.

#### Is gout curable?

There's currently no cure for gout, though researchers are constantly studying new drugs for potential gout treatment. That said, you can treat and manage gout to help prevent future flares and possible joint damage.

Gout flares tend to last 1-2 weeks before they get better. Severe gout may cause longer lasting flares that also develop more frequently.

# Can Gout pass from person to person? common questions

● Gout is a type of inflammatory arthritis, a group of joint conditions characterised by swelling, pain, and stiffness in your joints.



#### How is gout treated?

Gout treatment focuses on reducing symptoms, preventing flares, and reducing uric acid in the body.

With that in mind, a doctor may recommend the following treatment options:

▶ Pain medications: These may include acetaminophen (Tylenol) or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

▶ Steroids: Corticosteroid shots or oral steroid medications can help reduce severe inflammation.

▶ Colchicine: Available under the brand names Colcris and Mitigare, colchicine is a prescription medication that helps manage gout flares.

▶ Uric acid-lowering drugs: These medications may help prevent future gout flares and complications like kidney stones and tophi. Examples include allopurinol (Aloprim, Zyloprim), pegloticase (Krystexxa), and febuxostat (Uloric).

▶ Chronic disease management: A doctor may recommend treatments for underlying conditions, such as hypertension or diabetes.

▶ Lifestyle changes: These may include dietary changes, exercise, and weight loss.

Learn more about gout treatments.

#### How long does it take to treat gout?

Treatment for gout typically lasts for several days or weeks, depending on how long the flare lasts. Flares are then followed by times of remission, which may last for up to months or years before another flare occurs. During remission, it's a good idea to take steps for gout self-management to help reduce flare recurrence. These steps include eating a well-balanced diet low in purines, exercising, and managing underlying health conditions, like kidney or heart conditions, if you have those.

People with more severe gout or frequent flares may need ongoing treatment with uric acid-lowering drugs.

#### Takeaway

Gout is a type of inflammatory arthritis that results from uric acid buildup in the body.

There's currently no cure for gout, but you can manage current and future flares with a combination of treatments and lifestyle changes.

Treating gout can also help reduce your likelihood of complications, including permanent joint damage, as well as prevent kidney stones or kidney damage.

#### Healthline





THE sleep habits you develop in the middle of your life can have a profound impact on your future heart health, according to new research.

The study, recently published in the journal *Circulation*, found that regularly sleeping fewer than seven hours a night and waking up too early or throughout the night can increase a person's future risk of stroke, heart attack, and myocardial infarction.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in women, and poor sleep is a major health issue for women, especially in midlife. While previous studies have looked at how a poor night's sleep is related to the development of heart disease, it's been unclear how long-term sleep problems impact the risk of heart disease.

The new findings suggest that long-term sleep issues and heart disease are closely linked and underscore the need to improve heart disease prevention efforts in women.

"More women will die from cardiac disease than from cancer. With control of risk factors we can actually prevent heart disease in women," Dr. Eleanor Levin, a cardiologist with Stanford Medicine, told Healthline.

#### Years of poor sleep may heighten your risk of heart disease

The researchers evaluated the sleep habits and health outcomes of 2,964 women between 42 and 52 years of age.

The participants were premenopausal or early perimenopausal, not using hormone therapy, and did not have heart disease.

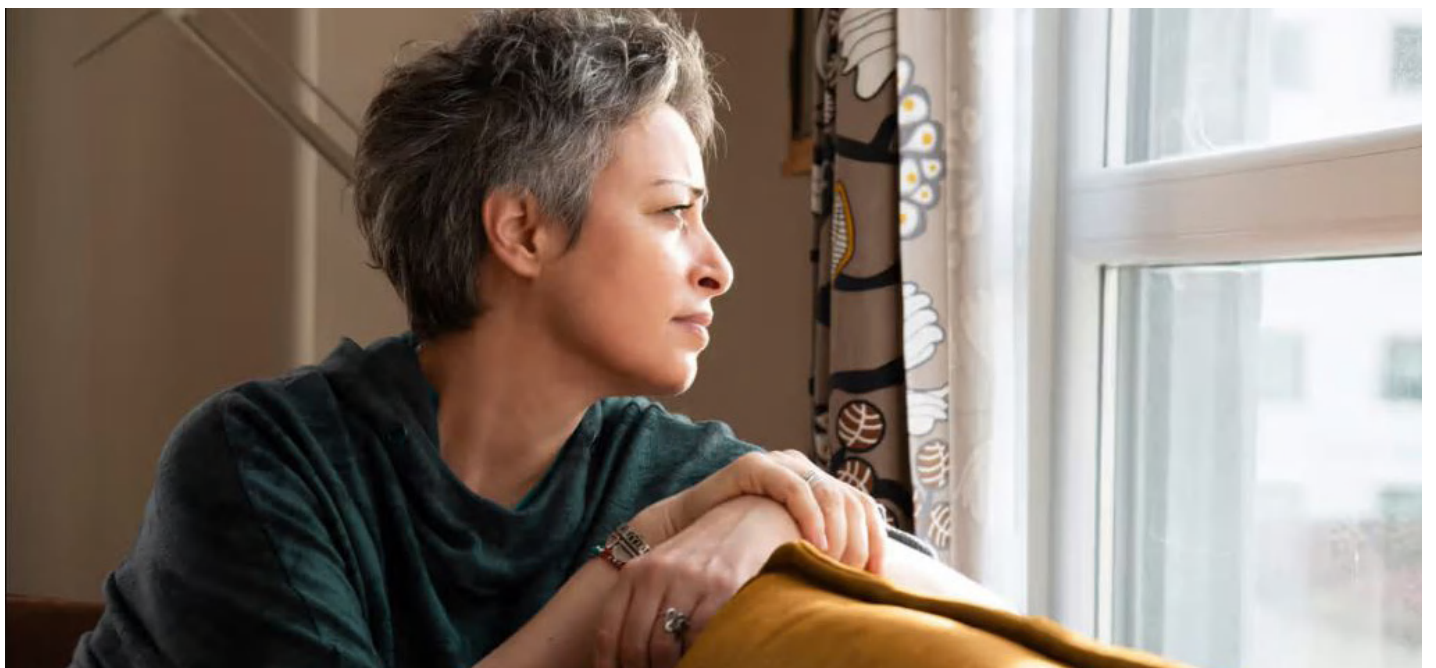
Over 22 years, the participants completed up to 16 visits where they completed questionnaires about their sleep habits, including whether they have insomnia symptoms and how long they typically sleep, along with mental health issues, like depression, and vasomotor symptoms, such as hot flashes.

The questionnaire also included questions about their anthropometric measurements, such as their height and weight, blood draws, and heart events, such as myocardial infarction, stroke or heart failure. Roughly one in four of the women regularly experienced insomnia symptoms, such as trouble falling asleep, waking up in the night, or waking up earlier than planned, and 14 percent frequently dealt with short sleep duration.

About seven per cent reported habitual insomnia symptoms and short sleep duration. The researchers discovered that those who had chronically high insomnia symptoms had a higher risk of developing CVD later in life.

# Not enough sleep can increase women's risk of heart disease by 75%

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in women, and poor sleep is a major health issue for women, especially in midlife.
- A new study finds long-term sleep issues and heart disease are closely linked for women.
- Women who had chronic insomnia or who slept less than 5 hours a night had a higher risk of heart disease.



**Poor sleep likely negatively impacts heart health through a combination of mechanisms, such as increasing sympathetic nervous system activity, dysregulating autonomic nervous system activity, and increasing systemic inflammation**

In addition, women who regularly slept less than five hours a night had a slightly higher risk of heart disease.

Individuals who persistently had high insomnia symptoms and slept less than five hours a night had a 75% higher risk of heart disease, even when the researchers adjusted for CVD risk factors. According to the researchers, the findings highlight the impact long-term sleep problems can have on women's heart health.

#### How poor sleep hurts your heart

There are multiple explanations as to why poor sleep can impair heart function over time. "Poor sleep likely negatively impacts heart health through a combination of mechanisms, such as increasing sympathetic nervous system activity, dysregulating autonomic nervous system activity, and increasing systemic inflammation," said Dr. Cheng-Han Chen, an interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Structural Heart Program at MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center in Laguna Hills, CA. Poor sleep quality is associated with an increased risk of hypertension and insulin resistance, both risk factors for heart disease. "Lack of sleep makes high blood pressure worse and can lead to bad eating habits with more carbohydrates and sugars, making prediabetes and cholesterol worse," says Levin. In addition, many people with insomnia also have sleep apnea, which is a known risk factor for heart disease. Women have different heart disease symptoms than men and are less likely to be treated

properly. Chen says it's essential that the medical community address sleep problems in women as part of their overall cardiovascular health management.

#### Here's what you can do to get better sleep

Experts say you should aim get about seven to eight hours of sleep a night. People looking to improve their sleep can take the following steps:

- ▶ Keep the bedroom cool, dark, and quiet
- ▶ avoid caffeine and alcohol
- ▶ maintain a consistent sleep-wake schedule
- ▶ exercise regularly
- ▶ avoid stimulants, like caffeine, in the afternoon

Medications can be prescribed to treat insomnia and a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine can be used by those with sleep apnea. "Extra attention needs to be paid in preventing the underlying risk factors of cardiovascular disease — such as hypertension, diabetes, and poor sleep — in order to improve their health outcomes," Chen said.

#### The bottom line:

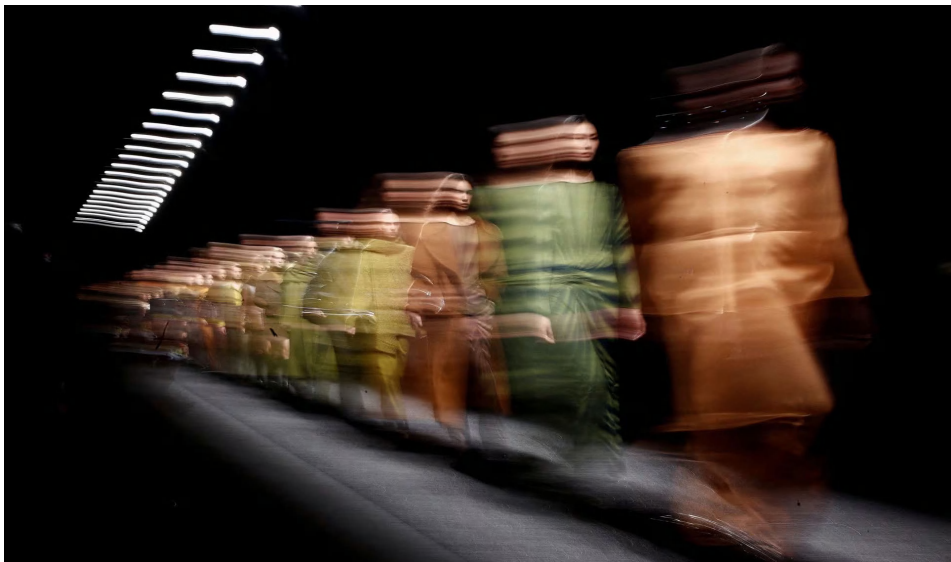
New research shows that long-term sleep issues can increase your risk of heart disease later in life. Heart disease is a leading cause of death in women, and the new findings underscore the need to improve heart disease prevention efforts in women.

**Healthline**





AROUND THE WORLD IN PICS



▲ Models present creations from the Alberta Ferretti Fall/Winter 2024/2025 collection during the Fashion Week in Milan, Italy



▲ A protester confronts a police member as Spanish farmers protest over price pressures, taxes and green regulation, grievances shared by farmers across Europe, in Madrid



▲ A person wearing a costume holds a placard, as supporters of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange protest outside the high court, on the day Assange appeals against his extradition to the United States, in London, Britain



▲ View of flag-draped coffins of Missak Manouchian, Armenian poet and communist fighter who became a figure of the World War II Resistance and who was executed at the Mont-Valerien in February 1944, and his wife Melinee Manouchian, and symbolic installations representing his 23 resistance comrades of the FTP-MOI, during the induction ceremony into the Pantheon, where key figures from France's history are honoured, in Paris, France



▲ A model presents a creation from the Etro Fall/Winter 2024/2025 collection during Fashion Week in Milan, Italy



▲ Occupants remove their belongings from their makeshift shelters after a fire broke out following their eviction from a piece of land, called "tent city" which they unlawfully occupied near the Green Point tennis courts in Cape Town, South Africa



▲ Cast members Paul Dano, Kunal Nayyar, Carey Mulligan and Adam Sandler attend a photocall to promote the movie "Spaceman" at the 74th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin, Germany.



▲ A view of scaffolding around a baroque sculpted bronze canopy by Gian Lorenzo Bernini over the high altar of St. Peter's Basilica in preparation for its restoration, at the Vatican.



# Dani Alves gets 4-1/2 years for rape in Spain, will appeal

BARCELONA, - Brazilian footballer Dani Alves was convicted of raping a woman in a Barcelona nightclub in 2022 and sentenced to 4-1/2 years in prison on Thursday, which his lawyer said he will appeal.

The top court in Spain's Catalonia region also ordered Alves, who repeatedly changed his story, first denying knowing the woman and eventually claiming the sex was consensual, to pay 150,000 euros (\$163,000) to the victim.

"It has been proven that the victim did not consent, and that there is evidence, in addition to the testimony of the plaintiff, to consider the rape proven," the court - the Audiencia Provincial de Barcelona - said in a statement.

The court said that as well as the victim's testimony, it considered as evidence of rape that she suffered a knee injury after Alves pushed her to the floor, her behaviour following the event and the fact that she suffered after-effects.

The prosecutor had sought a nine-year prison term for Alves and the victim requested 12 years, but the court landed on four and a half, saying it considered a mitigating factor that he had opted to pay the victim the compensation regardless of the outcome of the trial.

Alves also tried to use as mitigation the fact that he was drunk, but the court rejected it.

His lawyer Ines Guardiola told reporters outside the court that her legal team was going to appeal and that they will defend Alves' innocence until the end.

"I can only say that I still believe Alves is innocent," she said adding her client was "coping well."

The 40-year-old former Barcelona defender was arrested in January last year and has been held on remand since then.

The case has attracted significant attention not only due to Alves' profile but be-

cause gender violence has become an increasingly dominant topic in Spain's public discourse.

It has been one of the most high-profile trials in Spain since a law was passed in 2022 that made consent a key element in sexual assault cases and widened the range of prison time.

Alves benefited from this law, introduced by Spain's socialist-led government and known as "Only Yes is Yes," as it carried a lower minimum sentence as a result of merging the formerly distinct felonies of sexual abuse and aggression.

The law had to be amended in 2023 to remove a loophole which was used by hundreds of convicted rapists to reduce their prison terms or win early release.

The victim's lawyer David Saenz told reporters they were satisfied with the verdict, adding that his team would nonetheless analyse whether Alves' sentence corresponds to the gravity of the crime.

"The sentence recognises what we've been saying all along: that the victim was telling the truth and that she suffered," he said.

Alves, one of the most successful footballers in history having won more than 40 trophies for his country and clubs like Juventus, Paris St Germain and Barcelona, joined Mexican side Pumas UNAM in 2022 for a reported 300,000 euros monthly salary.

The club terminated Alves' contract after his arrest and suggested they could take legal action against the player, requesting \$5 million in compensation for the breaking of an ethics and behaviour clause.

(Reuters)



▲ Brazilian footballer Dani Alves was convicted of raping a woman in a Barcelona nightclub in 2022 and sentenced to 4-1/2 years in prison on Thursday, which his lawyer said he will appeal.

## Alonso focused on Leverkusen despite job speculation

BERLIN - Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso would not be drawn on reports linking him with a potential move to the Premier League or Bundesliga rivals Bayern Munich, saying on Thursday he had nothing new to add.

The Spaniard has a contract with Leverkusen to 2026, and his team are currently top of the Bundesliga, eight points clear of champions Bayern, who on Wednesday said they would part ways with coach Thomas Tuchel at the end of the season.

Leverkusen are unbeaten across all competitions this season as they eye their first ever Bundesliga title that would end 11 years of uninterrupted Bayern dominance in the league.

Tuchel's end-of-the-season departure from Bayern has fanned speculation regarding Alonso possibly succeeding him with the Leverkusen coach having played for Bayern from 2014-17.

"Maybe you have questions about my future but I have nothing new to say about that. I wanted to say that in advance," Alonso told a press conference.

The 42-year-old has also been linked with a possible move to



▲ RES Corporation General Operations Manager Patrick Myeni was recently appointed EEC Board Chairperson

Liverpool with current coach Juergen Klopp stepping down at the end of the season. Alonso also had a successful spell at Liverpool from 2004-2009.

"For me this (speculation) is not a problem," he said. "I know that my goal is to be successful with my team. That is my job. We are currently in a good position and we want to keep at it."

(Reuters)

## Man City, Arsenal seek to keep heat on Liverpool

LONDON - With leaders Liverpool otherwise engaged this weekend Manchester City and Arsenal have the chance to close the gap in what is brewing to be the closest Premier League title race for years.

Juergen Klopp's side hit back to beat Luton Town on Wednesday and stretch their lead to four points as they turn their attention to Sunday's League Cup final against Chelsea.

Champions City, who like Arsenal have played 25 games to Liverpool's 26, head to Bournemouth on Saturday evening before Arsenal then try to settle some scores with Newcastle United.

Liverpool have 60 points to City's 56 and Arsenal's 55 with all three sides knowing that the margins for error are minimal.

City's draw with Chelsea last weekend snapped an 11-match winning streak in all competitions and altered the odds ever so slightly in the title race.

But a hard-fought victory over Brentford in midweek courtesy of Erling Haaland's goal got them back on track and Pep Guardiola's side will be expected to dispatch a Bournemouth team they beat 4-1 this time last year as they chased down Arsenal.

Arsenal's sensational start to 2024 suffered a bump on Wednesday as they lost 1-0 to Porto in their Cham-



▲ Juergen Klopp's side hit back to beat Luton Town on Wednesday and stretch their lead to four points as they turn their attention to Sunday's League Cup final against Chelsea.

pions League last-16 clash, failing to have a shot on target.

Mikel Arteta's side can ill afford any hangover from that game as they host Newcastle.

The last time the two sides met Arteta was left seething about the match officials after a 1-0 defeat on Tyneside in November -- describing them as "embarrassing and a disgrace".

That was Arsenal's first league defeat of the season but apart from a dip around Christmas they look better-equipped to go the full distance this time after faltering in the face of a Man City onslaught a year ago.

While Manchester United are not in the hunt for the title, they will

hope to mark the start of a new era with victory over Fulham on Saturday in their first game since Jim Ratcliffe's acquisition of 25% of the club's shares was completed.

The British billionaire, who is also investing hundreds of millions of pounds into the club's infrastructure, was certainly talking the talk on Wednesday as he mapped out his ambition. "We have a lot to learn from the noisy neighbour (Manchester City), and our other neighbour (Liverpool). They are the enemy at the end of the day and there's nothing I would like better than to knock both of them - or one of them - off their perch," Ratcliffe told the BBC.

(Reuters)



# Djokovic headlines Miami Open entry list

NOVAK Djokovic is set to return to the Miami Open next month after a five-year hiatus due to Covid-19 and U.S. travel restrictions, after being included on the entry list released by tournament organisers on Wednesday.

The Serbian world number one owns a joint record six Miami Open titles but was unable to even attempt adding to that tally in recent years as the United States did not allow unvaccinated foreigners to enter the country.

Reigning champion Daniil Medvedev and 2023 finalist Jannik Sinner are also on the entry list, with the latter having since avenged that loss when he beat the Russian in the Australian Open final to become the first Italian man to win a Grand Slam title since 1976.

Among the other names in the men's field are Spain's Carlos Alcaraz while Americans Taylor Fritz, Tommy Paul, Frances Tiafoe and Ben Shelton will lead the home charge.

On the women's side, world number one Iga Swiatek will be seeking a second Miami Open title, having



▲ Novak Djokovic is set to return to the Miami Open next month after a five-year hiatus due to Covid-19 and U.S. travel restrictions

previously triumphed in 2022 when she beat four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka in the final.

World number two Aryna Sabalenka, who retained her Australian Open title this year without dropping a set, and Florida residents Coco Gauff, Jessica Pegula and Madison Keys are all also expected to be in the women's field.

Defending women's champion Petra Kvitova is not playing this year, having announced her pregnancy at the start of the year. This year's Miami Open is scheduled for March 17-31. (Reuters)

## Kroos announces Germany return ahead of Euro 2024

WORLD Cup winner Toni Kroos announced his return to the German national team on Thursday ahead of Euro 2024 on home soil.

Kroos, 34, will be eligible for selection in the upcoming March international friendlies against France and the Netherlands.

"Hey folks, short and sweet, I'll be playing for Germany again from March," Kroos said in an Instagram post.

"Why? Because I was asked by the coach and I'm up for it.

"I'm sure that much more is possible with the team at the European Championship than most people think right now."

The Real Madrid midfielder, who has 106 caps for Germany, stepped down from international duty after the Euro 2020 last-16 elimination at the hands of eventual finalists England.

The four-time world champions have struggled in recent years, having been dumped out at the group stage in the past two World Cups.

Germany have won just three of their 11 matches since the 2022 Qatar World Cup, a run which led to Hansi Flick becoming the first German coach to be sacked.

His replacement Julian Nagelsmann, who has a contract until the end of Euro 2024, has won just one of four games since taking over, including defeats by Turkey and Austria.

Kroos has missed just two out of a possible 32 matches in LaLiga and the Champions League for Real Madrid this season amid an ongoing



▲ World Cup winner Toni Kroos announced his return to the German national team on Thursday ahead of Euro 2024 on home soil.

injury crisis for the Spanish league leaders.

"His pass rate is the same as 10 years ago. He's always top class," Real coach Carlo Ancelotti said of Kroos earlier this month.

Kroos said at the same press conference he "had not made a decision" on a possible international return, joking the call was so difficult he wanted someone else to make it for him.

Nagelsmann had previously described the idea of a Kroos comeback as "an interesting thought".

Germany play a friendly against France in Lyon on March 23, then host the Netherlands four days later in Frankfurt.

Kroos would likely fit into a talented but inexperienced Germany midfield, with Jamal Musiala and Florian Wirtz both aged just 20.

The hosts will open the tournament against Scotland in Munich on June 14, before also facing Hungary in Stuttgart on June 19 and Switzerland in Frankfurt on June 23 in Group A. (Reuters)

## Marathon world record holder's body returns home

ELDORET, Kenya - Hundreds of Kenyans paid their respects on Thursday as the body of marathon world record holder Kelvin Kiptum, who dreamed of breaking the race's storied two-hour barrier, was driven to his home village for burial.

Kiptum, 24, and his coach Gervais Hakizimana were killed earlier this month when the runner lost control of the vehicle he was driving in the Rift Valley and crashed into a tree. The pathologist's report said he died of head injuries.

Singing hymns and holding hands, mourners accompanied the convoy carrying Kiptum's flower-lined casket as it departed a morgue in the western Kenyan city of Eldoret.

The casket was opened for a viewing in the local county capital on its way to Chepsamo village. Kiptum's father held the late runner's 7-year-old son, while women's 1,500 metre world record holder Faith Kipyegon held her face in her hands.

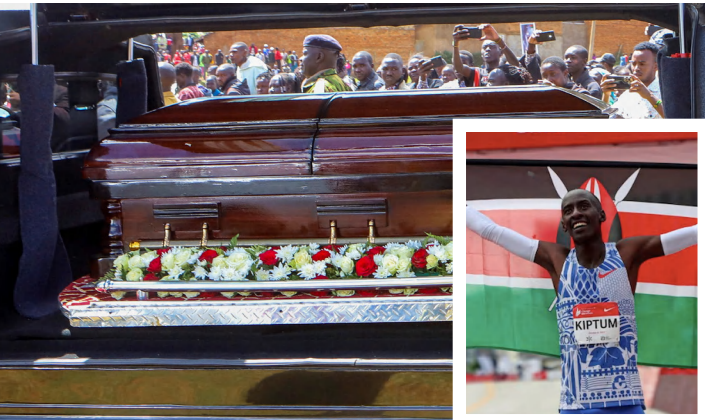
Kiptum had only run three marathons but each was among the fastest seven times ever recorded. He set the world record at the Chicago Marathon in October in two hours and 35 seconds, eclipsing the 2:01:09 run by compatriot Eliud Kipchoge in 2022.

Kiptum had hoped to break two hours in Rotterdam in April and was also expected to make his Olympic debut in Paris this year in what could have been his first head-to-head match-up with Kipchoge.

The casket will travel about 80 km (50 miles) on its way from Eldoret to Chepsamo, where Kiptum worked as a livestock herder before becoming a professional runner. He will be buried on Friday.

Kiptum is survived by his wife, his seven-year-old son and six-year-old daughter. Kenyan President William Ruto ordered a house to be built for the family.

His coach Hakizimana was buried on Wednesday in his native Rwanda. (Reuters)



▲ Hundreds of Kenyans paid their respects on Thursday as the body of marathon world record holder Kelvin Kiptum.

## Charlie Woods to compete in pre-qualifier for PGA Tour event

CHARLIE Woods, the son of 15-times major winner Tiger Woods, will compete in a pre-qualifier event as he bids to secure a place in the PGA Tour's Cognizant Classic next week in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

The 15-year-old Woods will play on Thursday in an 18-hole event at Lost Lake Golf Club in Hobe Sound, Florida, one of four pre-qualifying sites, the PGA Tour website reported on Wednesday.

Approximately 25 players and ties from each of the four pre-qualifying sites will advance to a Monday qualifier, from which four players will earn spots in the Cognizant Classic from Feb. 29-March 3 at PGA National Resort.

Among those in the field for the Cognizant Classic are major winners Rory McIlroy, Shane Lowry, Matt Fitzpatrick, Justin Rose and Gary Woodland.

Woods is scheduled to tee off at 7:39 a.m. ET (1239 GMT) on Thursday alongside Olin Browne Jr. -- son of three-times PGA



▲ Charlie Woods will compete at the PGA Tour.

Tour winner Olin Browne -- and Ruaidhri Mcgee.

Woods has competed with his father in the last four editions of the PNC Championship -- a 36-hole event featuring two-player teams made up of a major champion and a family member -- and finished runner-up in 2021.

Tiger Woods, who entered the year aiming to play one event a month, withdrew during the second round of last week's Genesis Invitational at Riviera due to the flu, which brought an abrupt end to his first PGA Tour start since last April's Masters. (Reuters)



# ‘It would mean the world’ to win Kaizer Chiefs a trophy

CAVIN Johnson has admitted he would love to be the coach that breaks Kaizer Chiefs’ trophy drought by winning this season’s Nedbank Cup.

If Amakhosi fail to lift a piece of silverware this season, it will be a full nine years since Chiefs last won an official PSL trophy.

With Chiefs nowhere near Mamelodi Sundowns in the race for the DStv Premiership, the Nedbank Cup represents their last realistic chance of giving their millions of supporters some joy in the 2023/24

“Personally it would mean the world to me (winning the Nedbank Cup),” said Amakhosi interim head coach Johnson, whose side will be at home to Motsepe Championship side Milford FC in the last 32 on Sunday.

“I think to Chiefs and our massive following it would be huge. I think any club in the PSL puts a lot of emphasis on any trophy and I don’t think we are different to any club.

“If I was here from the beginning (of the season) I would have said that of the four trophies on offer, I want to win all four.

“Let’s hope Sundowns lose five games in the league and we have a chance (in the title race). In saying that, realistically, this (the Nedbank Cup) is the only one on offer. We are putting our emphasis on this competition, and playing the best we can for this trophy for as long as we can.”

‘One big player’

Johnson admits that Milford FC, who are currently 12th in the Championship in their first season in



▲ Cavin Johnson has admitted he would love to be the coach that breaks Kaizer Chiefs’ trophy drought by winning this season’s Nedbank Cup.

South Africa’s second tier, are a bit of an unknown quantity to Amakhosi, though they have done their best to get footage of the Richards Bay side.

“Milford are a secret to us, and we tried to do our homework and came up with a few things. They bought over Uthongathi (Milford acquired the NFD status of Uthongathi ahead of the new season).

“We did look at them and there is one little player, actually one big player, (Siyabonga) Nzama, who makes them tick.

“We always play NFD teams in pre-season and when we get time off for Fifa breaks, and whenever we play these teams they give us a hard time. So we will have to up our game 200 percent.”

(The Citizen)

## Mvala, Mudau face months out as Sundowns injury crisis deepens

IT will take a while longer before Mamelodi Sundowns fans get a glimpse of returning Bafana Bafana defenders Mothobi Mvala and Khuliso Mudau. The pair returned from the Africa Cup of Nations carrying injuries.

They didn’t feature in the games against Orlando Pirates and La Masia.

Rulani Mokwena is not expecting Mvala and Mudau back in the next two months meaning they might return only in April.

“Some of it (selection) is not even by choice because Mothobi is out and he will be out for about six to 8 weeks. Sailor (Mudai) is also out for about 6 to 8 weeks,” Mokwena revealed.

“You know that he got injured and still played which disappoints me a little bit. Ronza (Ronwen Williams) is still struggling with a shoulder injury and today (against La Masia) we rested him to give him some time off.”

The Brazilians head coach also gave an update on inspirational captain Themba Zwane who has also



▲ Khuliso Mudau, Grant Kekana and Mothobi Mvala of Mamelodi Sundowns represented South Africa at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations in Cote d’Ivoire.

missed the last two games.

“Mshishi (Zwane) also has a bit of a niggle. Some of the players that are coming back from Bafana, it’s not even about whether we want to give them a break or not, we can’t use them,” he added.

“They’ve returned with serious

injuries but it is what it is. We have to try and use the rest of the squad. You saw today and also against Pirates that they’ve got the quality to compete and help the team. That’s the responsibility that they all have.”

(The Citizen)

## Nyatama appreciates Komphela’s message

... as he aims to change Swallows’ fortunes

MOROKA Swallows FC interim-coach Musa Nyatama says he appreciates the message from former coach Steve Komphela, who asked the players to respect the new technical team after he left the club.

Nyatama was working hand in hand with Komphela for the last seven months, but the troubles at the club saw the latter leaving his post as the head coach of the Birds.

While he appreciates Komphela’s message, Nyatama says he just wants to focus on doing good for the club and not dwell on what transpired in the last three months.

Swallows’ players went on strike over unpaid salaries and the side subsequently failed to turn up for DStv Premiership matches against Mamelodi Sundowns and Golden Arrows at the end of the year. This resulted in 3-0 wins being awarded to Sundowns and Arrows, while Swallows were hit with a large fine.

The club then sacked a host of players after an internal disciplinary hearing and Komphela followed soon after.

“I have to thank coach Steve and appreciate his words that the players should respect the technical team that is there. But, respect is something that we get and appreciate from the players,” said Nyatama.

“I think moving forward it

will make it easy for us as the technical team to help Swallows since you said we are swimming in problems. But that is not something that we want to dwell on, we want to help them go forward and get positive results.”

Edged out

Nyatama, who is on his second stint as an interim-coach of Swallows, started the year with a loss after they were edged out 1-0 by Polokwane City in the DStv Premiership last weekend.

The team is now preparing to take on Platinum City Rovers in the last 32 of the Nedbank Cup at Isak Steyl Stadium on Saturday, and the Birds mentor wants to see his side winning the match and building confidence within his players.

“It won’t be an easy game. We all know that playing teams in the lower division is always difficult because they always want to prove a point. But I think the guys are ready and we are coming from a loss, so we want to build our confidence,” he added. “It is a very difficult task for us with the new players coming in. But they are gelling and they are trying their best to get into the philosophy of how Swallows plays. It will take time but as a team we are ready to take on Platinum City Rovers.”

(The Citizen)



▲ Moroka Swallows FC interim-coach Musa Nyatama says he appreciates the message from former coach Steve Komphela, who asked the players to respect the new technical team after he left the club.



# Thabiso set to travel to Italy on February 26

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela  
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TOP boxer, Thabiso Dlamini, is set to travel to Italy for the 2024 Olympic Games, possibly on February 26. The qualifiers will take place between February 29 and March 12, 2024, at Busta Arsizio.

The Matsapha boxing club will aim to book a place in the next global showpiece between July and August in Paris, France.

Dlamini previously lost out in the African qualifiers which were held at Dakar, Senegal.

Eswatini Boxing Association (EBA) Secretary Nathie Dlamini said preparations for the trip were at an advanced stage.

“The boxer will soon travel to Italy for the qualifiers, and we are confident that he will perform well in the tournament,” he said.

The boxer set he is geared up for the upcoming tournament.

“I am currently working hard at training in Gqeberha ahead of my trip to Italy and I am confident that I will qualify for the Olympic games,” Dlamini said.

Thabiso is currently in a month training camp in Gqeberha together with teammate Zweli Dlamini

The seasoned boxer will also represent the country in the 2024 Africa Games in March in Ghana alongside Sibongiseni Shongwe.

Thabiso spent 2023 on a one-year training programme in Russia which was facilitated by the International Boxing Association (IBA).



▲ Top boxer, Thabiso Dlamini, is set to travel to Italy for the 2024 Olympic Games, possibly on February 26.



▲ Eswatini Pool national team in a recent international tournament.

## ECSA announces Witbank tournament squad

THE Eswatini Cue Sports Association has announced a five-member national team to represent the country in the Witbank Invitational tournament.

The tournament will take place between April 28 to 5 May at Emalahleni Pool Club.

The squad comprises top female player Ncobile Dlamini and her two female compatriots Simphiwe Dlamini and Vumile Dlamini.

Top male player Nkhosinathi ‘Bhubesi’ Sihlongonyane is also part of the team together with veteran player Romeo Da Silva.

The squad will be led by ECSA Manager Mbongeni ‘Mdlikiza’ Gamedze who is the squad manager.

Gamedze confirmed the list when contacted by Eswatini Daily News.

“We will be attending an international

tournament in Witbank, and we are appealing for funds from local businesses and the nation at large,” he said.

The national team previously attended the 2023 All Africa Pool Association Africa games which were held in Johannesburg.

### The full squad Females

Ncobile Dlamini  
Simphiwe Dlamini  
Vumile Dlamini  
Nandipha Mkhwanazi

### Males

Nkhosinathi ‘Bhubesi’ Sihlongonyane  
Romeo Da Silva

### Manager:

Mbongeni Gamedze

## Taekwondo Federation eyeing 2024 cadets’ championships

THE Eswatini Taekwondo Federation (ETF) is targeting to attend the 2024 World Cadets championships.

The international junior championships are scheduled to take place in June possibly in Vietnam.

ETF Secretary Mbongeni ‘Ndo ‘Sibandze said the tournament was part of their plans for the year.

“We are hoping to send a junior team to the world junior cadet’s championships lat-

er this year pending the availability of funds. We will soon have a grading tournament at Salesian Hall where we will be scouting athletes for some of the upcoming assignments,” he said.

Taekwondo will also be part of team Eswatini in the 2024 African games slated for March in Ghana.

The national team recently failed to qualify for the 2024 Olympic Games qualifiers which were held in Senegal.



▲ The Eswatini Taekwondo Federation (ETF) is targeting to attend the 2024 World Cadets championships.



# Lindo out of Sihlangu team to face Somalia

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

ZESCO United defender Lindo Mkhonta has been left off the Sihlangu squad to face Somalia in the 2025 AFCON preliminary round qualifiers next month.

Mkhonta is the only international player who has been left by head coach Dominic Kunene.

Kunene has included three other international players in Jwaneng Galaxy midfielder Mxolisi Mkhonto and Richard Bay FC winger Justice Figueiredo.

Kunene is said to have included Botswana Police XI midfielder Banele ‘Stiga’ Ndzabandzaba in the list of players which is expected to be announced on Friday.

A source close to the matter revealed that the squad was presented to the Eswatini Football Association Executive Committee on Thursday afternoon.

“Lindo is not part of the team that was endorsed by the executive committee. The head coach has however included the three other international players. The full list will be released on Friday,” the source said.

Eswatini Football Association (EFA) Marketing and Communications Officer Muzi Radebe referred all queries of the squad to head Dominic Kunene.

“The issue of the list is handled by the head coach and he can give you a full update,” he said.

Meanwhile, Kunene could not be reached for comment at the time of compiling this report.

The nation’s pride is expected to play one friendly match before the 2025 AFCON preliminary round qualifiers against Somalia.

This is according to a correspondence released by Eswatini Football Association Chief Executive Officer Frederick Mngometulu to affiliates on Thursday, which this newspaper also has in its possession.

The proposed friendly match will take place between March 12 and 15 at a venue to be communicated in due course.

The squad will go to a full time on March 10 ahead of the away first leg between March 17 and March 18 at Mogadishu.

The return leg will set to place between March 25 and 26 March at Mbombela Stadium.

Mngomezulu further stated that the squad will train twice on Monday and Tuesday before the full-time.

The two nations will face off the first hurdle of the qualifiers between March 20 and 25 March following a draw conducted on Tuesday in Cairo.

Sihlangu previously faced the East Africans during the preliminary round of the 2023 edition qualifiers where the Dominic Kunene-led side recorded a 4-1 aggregate win over the same opponents in March 2022.

The four winners in the preliminary round will join the other 44 nations in the group stages for the biennial continental spectacle set to be hosted by Morocco in two years.

The Football mother body recently announced changes in the Sihlangu technical bench that saw the roping in of Ntibane and Ernest Mavuso as co-assistants to Kunene.

The changes further saw the deployment of Anthony Mdluli to the goalkeeper coach position replacing Siphon ‘Shilton’ Dube.



▲ Zesco United defender Lindo Mkhonta.

## ‘Suarez’, Thubelihle suspended for ‘Buffs’ clash

NSINGIZINI Hotspurs have suffered a blow as they will be without their playmaker Thubelihle Mavuso during their crunch MTN Premier League match against Young Buffaloes on Saturday at Ka Langa Technical Centre.

The national Under 23 player has been nabbed by the yellow card rule together with striker Mayibongwe ‘Suarez’ Mabuza.

Other suspended players include Denver Sundowns veteran defender Jimoh Moses and Manzini Sea Birds left-back Mkhuleko Magagula.

Five National First Division players are also suspended for the weekend matches such as Malanti Chiefs anchorman Sifiso Makhubu.

- The full list of suspended players:**
- Premier League:**
- Thubelihle Mavuso (Nsingizini Hotspurs)
  - Mayibongwe Mabuza (Nsingizini Hotspurs)
  - Jimoh Moses (Denver Sundowns)
  - Mkhuleko Magagula (Sea Birds).
- National First Division:** Mukelo



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs’ Mayibongwe ‘Suarez’ Mabuza and Thubelihle Mavuso (Right).  
Nhlabatsi (Sisonkhe), Senzo Ndlovu (Ludzeludze Killers), Sifiso Makhubu (Malanti Chiefs) and Sifiso Mdllovu (Nyanyali Celtics).







**Alves guilty of rape, gets 4 and half years**  
*Page 19*

**Thubelihle suspended for 'Buffs' clash** *Page 23*



**Eswatini Daily News** *Friday 23 February, 2024*  
**Sport**



**Lindo out of Sihlangu team to face Somalia**

... Eswatini international Lindo Mkhonta has once again been left out of the national team, Sihlangu with Banele 'Stiga' Ndzabandzaba, Mxolisi Mkhonto and Justice Figa-reido expected to be included in the squad to face Somalia in the AFCON 2025 preliminary round qualifier. **Page 23**