SWAZILAND — GENERAL

1991
**5 Ministers face sacking**

MBABANE - Five Swazi Cabinet Ministers face dismissal this week.

A Swazi newspaper reported they are to be replaced.

They are Interior Minister Mr Senzenjani Thabala, Labour Minister Senator Ben Nhlanzwa, Social Affairs Minister Dr Fanny Friedman, Agriculture Minister Mr. Sipho Mamba and Education Minister Chief Sipho Shongwe.
Swazi rulers criticised as army of jobless grows

MANZINI. — An organisation claiming to represent Swaziland's growing army of unemployed people has accused the tiny country's royalist government of corruption, negligence, abuse of power and crimes against humanity and called for the endorsement of a Bill of Rights and the establishment of a comprehensive trade union body.

The Swaziland National Association of Unemployed People, in a highly critical statement issued by its Manzini branch chairman, Mr Arafat Matsabula, said the kingdom's growing rate of unemployment was shocking.

Mr Matsabula said the "massive growth of unemployment" in Swaziland could be attributed to "repressive laws, undemocratic economic policy, grave violation of man's most important rights, and generally by the government's negligence".

SUPREME POWER

Swaziland has been ruled in terms of supreme power assumed by the then King Sobhuza II since 1973. The executive authority exercised through the Cabinet is now vested in his son King Mswati III, who was crowned in 1986. Political parties opposing the ruling royalist Imbokodvo National Movement are not permitted.

Mr Matsabula said as long as the country's people were denied their right to self-determination, the goal of development in economic, social and cultural fields would not be achieved.

A Bill of Rights was required to give all citizens the right to participate in administration of state and public affairs, thereby "moving away from the authoritarian ruling system".

HIGH CRIME RATE

Swaziland's present political system "gives way to oppression and exploitation. As a result of this situation, unemployment, corruption, abuse of power, political repression and high criminal rate continue to loom over society."

"These anti-social practises will continue unchallenged until the undemocratic stigma is completely removed from the Swazi society," said Mr Matsabula.

His lengthy statement never once referred to the monarchy directly, but at one point suggested that the Swazi people's rights would not be guaranteed as long as "the looting of our economic wealth and exploitation of our labour by both the elite and the corrupt government" continued.

The creation of a "new democratic society where the people will freely determine their political status, freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development", was urgently required.

Mr Matsabula also proposed the establishment of a mother body of trade unions to represent working and unemployed people, who should resolve in 1991 to challenge the government's "undemocratic economic policy and unconcern".

He also called on the army and police to defy violent orders directed against the Swazi people and for the launch of an international campaign to solicit support from the outside world. — Sapa.
Hunger strikers in hospital

MBABANE: Five Swazis detained without trial have been taken to hospital after a 12-day hunger strike. Two were still weak after a 17-day hunger strike last month, hospital sources said. The five were detained after being acquitted of treason and belonging to an illegal political party. They are university lecturer Ray Russon, lawyer Dominic Zulu and students Sabelo Dlamini, Mphandana Shongwe and Boy Magagula. — Star Africa Service.
Hunger strikers

MBABANE - A group of five Swazis being held in detention without trial have been transferred to hospital after a 12 day hunger strike protest. Two of the five were reportedly still weak after a previous 17 day hunger strike in December.

The five were detained soon after they were acquitted in the High Court in November last year on charges of high treason and of belonging to an illegal political party.
Swazi Havelock mine faces closure after subsidy loss

SWAZILAND's oldest mining operation, the Havelock asbestos mine, is on the verge of closure after the government decided this week to withdraw the subsidy on which the mine depended.

The mine's closure could potentially provide a new market for SA producers. Havelock chairman Pat Hart—who is also CE of SA asbestos-producing companies Gefco and Msauli—said yesterday a Swazi government task force appointed to investigate the mine's viability three weeks ago had recommended the government end its financial support, worth more than R15m in loans over the past two years. Outstanding money owed to Havelock as part of the most recent loan of R6m was suspended.

Hart said Havelock's future was "now in the hands of its shareholders".

Despite the discovery of R200m worth of ore reserves in 1990, high operating costs, aggravated by a lack of development, cast doubt on its future. It employs about 1 800 people of the 2 200 in the mining industry. Swaziland derived more than 40% of its mineral revenue from asbestos in 1989.

The mine is 40% owned by Tibbalo Taka-Ngwane Royal Trust, 40% owned by private Swazi investors, and 20% owned by British-based Turner & Newall plc.
Treason

MBABANE - Swazi prime minister Mr. Obed Dlamini is to meet seven people who were acquitted on charges of high treason last year, but claim they have been harassed and victimised ever since.
Swazi MP flees country in fear

MBABANE - Outspoken Swazi parliamentarian Phillip Dlamini has fled the country in fear of being detained under the kingdom's controversial 60-day detention-without-trial law, a Swazi newspaper reported yesterday.

The Times of Swaziland - said Dlamini had fled to an unidentified "neighbouring" country for asylum after orders were issued on Friday that he be fired from the Simunye Sugar Company where he was personnel manager.

The newspaper quoted Dlamini as saying the orders came "from above".

He said he was in parliament at the time the orders were issued.

The Times said the politician, who allegedly made serious allegations against the government in parliament this week, telephoned the newspaper at the weekend to say he was "safely out" of the country.

Dlamini alleged in parliament there was a sinister group of influential politicians which had "hijacked the government." He claimed the group had taken over the power of the prime minister and cabinet.

He also led other parliamentarians in a verbal protest against the tabling of a R45 million defence budget.

The paper quoted Dlamini as saying senior officials from Tibyo, the Swazi national investment organisation - the major shareholder in SSC - arrived at the sugar company on Friday with orders that he be fired, his company car be seized and that he be evicted from the company house.

In his telephone call, Dlamini said he feared he was about to be detained under the detention without-trial law. - Sapin.
Swazi MP is fired

MBABANE - A Swazi MP who fled his country fearing victimisation for his outspoken criticisms in parliament was ordered to be fired from his job by the "higher authority" - King Mswati or senior royal advisers.

Mr Thembu Dlamini, general manager of Tibiyo tisaka Ngwane, an organisation which has a major shareholding in the Simunye Sugar Corporation where the MP Mr Philip Dlamini worked, confirmed the dismissal order.

Simunye executives said they were told to fire Dlamini last week.

Dlamini fled the country last week, and then telephoned a local newspaper from "a neighbouring country". He said he had heard about the dismissal order while in parliament, and decided to flee because he feared he would be detained without trial.
Rio Tinto gets Swazi gold rights

MBABANE — Rio Tinto, a subsidiary of the UK-based RTZ Corporation Plc, has been granted exclusive rights, for a period of five years, to explore for gold in northwest Swaziland.

The agreement was signed in Mbabane on Thursday by the chief executive of Rio Tinto, Mr Al Leroy, and the chairman of Swaziland's minerals committee, Mr Gwece Dlamini.

The terms of the contract call for Rio Tinto at the end of the five period to provide the minerals committee with a feasibility report and the mining plan.

— Sapa
Correspondent. Swaziland. Some 500 Swazi political prisoners were sentenced to 10 years in prison in a mass trial by a three-judge panel on Monday. The trial resulted from charges of sedition and insurrection brought against 200 people in connection with the 1987 Swazi National Congress.

The weekend saw renewed hunger strike by the inmates in the prison. They have been held in prison for several months, demanding their release and an end to political repression.

Family sources said that some inmates have been hospitalised due to poor food and lack of medical care. The prison authorities have denied these claims, stating that all inmates are receiving adequate treatment.

The Swazi government has been under international pressure to release the political prisoners, who are alleged to have been involved in the 1987 uprising against the monarchy.
MBABANE - Swaziland's Minister of Commerce Mr Nkomeni Mtsweni will not attend a trade and economy conference organised by South African business organisations to be held in the kingdom from tomorrow.

Sponsors of the conference are the South African Chamber of Business, the South African Foreign Trade Association and the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Speakers have been invited from almost a dozen black African countries.

The Swazi head of state, King Mswati, has been invited to open the conference, and Prime Minister Mr Obed Mkhize has been asked to speak.

Ignore

Officials of the Swazi Commerce Ministry and local business organisations were not originally invited, and have decided to ignore the conference.

Mtsweni said yesterday: "The conference has nothing to do with the preferential trade area grouping or the Southern African Development Coordination Conference. My Ministry has nothing to do with the conference. I am not even going there."

Swazi Chamber of Commerce executive director, Mr David Price, also said his members would not attend.

Organisers agreed that local groups were not invited originally because of an oversight. There is now speculation on whether King Mswati and the Prime Minister will take up their invitations.

Argus Africa News Service.
of countries been South Africa News. The recent refusal of the government to open the country to the world has been a significant step towards a more democratic and united South Africa. The conference was attended by representatives from various countries.

Dr. Susan Talks: 

King Mswati

SOWETAN Thursday March 14 1991
Swazi king snubs economic conference

MBABANE — An international conference on regional economic co-operation got off to a bumpy start yesterday when it emerged that Swazi King Mswati III and his prime minister had refused to address the meeting.

The conference — attended by 230 delegates from 13 African countries, including representatives from the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference — is aimed at exploring possibilities for sub-Saharan economic co-operation.

Organising committee chairman Francois Marais said yesterday he was informed last week by Swazi Commerce, Industry and Tourism Minister Nkomeni Ntwane that the king had declined to open proceedings. The king was concerned about "taking a high profile at the conference" in view of his chairmanship of the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) — which excludes SA. Most of the delegates are SA businessmen.

Marais said Ntwane also felt the Swazi Chamber of Commerce had been slighted by not being invited to help organise the conference.

Swazi Prime Minister Obed Mkhize was due to deliver a speech at the gala dinner last night, but he too did not attend.

The conference is being hosted by the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Nafcoc), the SA Chamber of Business (Sacob) and the SA Foreign Trade Organisation (Safio).
Strange things happen in shadow of power

WHEN a Member of Parliament considers it advisable to flee into exile although he has apparently done nothing illegal it would suggest that an extraordinary situation exists in his country.

The flight from Swaziland of Mr Philip Dlamini is in fact only one of several indications that the situation prevailing there is indeed extraordinary.

Dlamini telephoned a local newspaper from Botswana to say he had fled because he feared being jailed without trial - a fate that has overtaken several Swazis in recent years.

Fear

His fear had been sparked by his having been fined from his job as personnel manager of a sugar corporation. The corporation has disclosed that the order for his dismissal came from “higher authority” - a euphemism generally understood to mean King Mswati, Swaziland’s absolute monarch, or someone acting in his name.

The order came after Dlamini had asserted in Parliament that a secret group with more power even than the Prime Minister was making major decisions, including the decision last year to fire a cabinet minister holding a key portfolio.

Victim

He did not name the minister but no Swazi was in any doubt that he was referring to the removal of Reginald Dladla as Minister of Justice and his replacement by Zonke Khumalo, a former deputy prime minister who was involved in a police investigation in 1981 into the misappropriation of government funds.

On the face of it, Dlamini appears to have been the victim of efforts to prevent him asking awkward questions in Parliament about how Swaziland is being governed.

While he was hiding out in Botswana, efforts were being made to further the case of another Swazi who claims to have been the subject of attempts to keep him silent.

Peter Forbes, a white Swazi with three generations of roots in the country, had approached Lord Forbes, head of Scotland’s Forbes clan, for assistance and protection after he had allegedly received threats of death if he went ahead with a court action to sue the Swazi government for R20 million.

From the ancestral home at Balfour in Aberdeenshire, Lord Forbes wrote to King Mswati asking him to protect Peter Forbes and ensure him safe access to the court.

Forbes’ proposed court action is aimed at obtaining compensation for losing his extensive business interests in Swaziland after he was jailed without trial in 1978.

He believes the purpose of his detention was to prevent him from exposing high-level corruption in the country.

In addition to compensation, Peter Forbes is seeking the return of his Swazi citizenship, which has been formally denied him by the Swazi authorities since he was taken to a hospital in Johannesburg during a hunger strike he embarked on in an effort to force them to give reasons for his detention without trial.

Other Swazis have more recently also resorted to hunger strikes in Matsapa prison to protest against their incarceration without trial.

A lecturer at the University of Swaziland, Ray Rutoro, was detained along with three students at the university, Sabelo Dlamini, Boy Magagula and Maphandana Shongwe, and a lawyer, Dominic Magomazulu, after they were acquitted last November of charges of high treason and of belonging to a political party, which are banned in Swaziland.

All five have gone on hunger strikes, one of them for more than 14 days, to protest against being imprisoned without trial.

Jailed

As was the case with Forbes, they are being held under a law that empowers the government to detain people for 60-day periods, which can be renewed indefinitely, without giving reasons.

But while Forbes believed he was jailed to silence him, there is no clarity about why the others are being held.

The most likely explanation appears to be that there is a desire in some quarters to discourage Swazis from agitating for a multi-party government rather than the all-powerful monarchy that now prevails.

Safe

There is no visible link between incarceration of the five, the flight of Dlamini the MP and the efforts of Forbes to gain safe access to the courts.

The only thing that is appears to be common to all three cases is that they evidently demonstrate the readiness of some in Swaziland to go to extraordinary lengths to suppress public knowledge, open debate and due process of the kind that is taken for granted in Western democracy.

Where does the king stand in all of this? Squarely in the middle, it seems, for since he has absolute power he must be assumed to have absolute responsibility for whatever happens in the shadow of that power.

Like his father, King Sobhuza, Mswati is guided to some extent by a group of advisers. But the identities of the advisers seem to be as obscure in his case as they were in his father’s.

The allegations of Dlamini the MP suggest that a new set of advisers might have replaced or joined the old group. His firing and subsequent flight suggest in addition that they are not anxious for their identities or activities to be disclosed. - Sowetan Correspondent

KING MSWATI

Political comment in this issue by Aggrey Klaaste and Deon du Plessis. Newsbriefs by Sydney Mathlaku. Sub-editing and headlines by Ivan Fynn. All of 61 Commando Road, Industria West, Johannesburg.

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MBABANE — The United States government yesterday issued an unprecedented statement deploring Swaziland's use of detention without trial legislation and urged the kingdom's government to charge detainees currently held or release them.

The strongly worded statement came after reports this week that five detainees, who have already served 120 days, had their detention orders renewed for another 60 days.

All five were acquitted of charges of high treason and of belonging to an illegal political party by the High Court in November. They were detained shortly afterwards.

The US condemnation, the first public reaction by any diplomatic mission in Swaziland, described the detentions as "deeply disappointing".

The US is a major aid donor to the kingdom. — Star Africa Service.
MP who fled is seeking asylum

GABORONE — The Office of the President has confirmed the presence in Botswana of Philip Dlamini, the MP who fled from Swaziland for fear of being detained there without trial.

Mr Dlamini is expected to seek political asylum.

His flight has caused concern in political circles in Swaziland.

Mr Dlamini's fears of detention arose from statements he made in Parliament. He called for details of military expenditure, which traditionally have never been questioned, and he also asserted that major decisions were being taken by a kind of "shadow Cabinet" with powers exceeding even those of the prime minister. (312)

One of those decisions, he said, related to the sacking of the former justice minister and his replacement by a politician previously involved in controversy.

— Africa Service.
Gerald L'Ange reports on indications of extraordinary events in Swaziland

Something rotten in the state [212].

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The flight from Swaziland of Philip Dlamini is in fact only one of several indications that the situation prevailing there is indeed extraordinary.

Mr Dlamini telephoned a local newspaper from Botswana to say he had fled because he feared being jailed without trial — a fate that has overtaken several Swazis in recent times.

His fear had been sparked by his dismissal from his job as personnel manager of a sugar corporation. The corporation has disclosed that the order came from "higher authority" — a euphemism generally understood to mean King Mswati, Swaziland's absolute monarch, or someone acting in his name.

The order came after Mr Dlamini had asserted in Parliament that a secret group with more power than the Prime Minister was making major decisions, including the decision last year to fire a key Cabinet Minister.

On the face of it, Mr Dlamini appears to have been the victim of efforts to prevent him asking awkward questions in Parliament about how Swaziland is governed.

While he was hiding out, efforts were being made to further the case of another Swazi who claims to have been the subject of attempts to keep him silent.

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Mr Forbes's proposed court action is aimed at obtaining compensation for losing his extensive business interests in Swaziland after he was jailed without trial in 1978. He believes the purpose of his detention was to prevent him from exposing high-level corruption in the country.

In addition to compensation, Mr Forbes is seeking the return of his Swazi citizenship, which has been denied him by the Swazi authorities since he was taken to a hospital in Johannesburg during a hunger strike he embarked on in an effort to force them to give reasons for his detention.

Other Swazis have more recently also resorted to hunger strikes in Matsapha prison to protest against their incarceration without trial.

A lecturer at the University of Swaziland, Ray Russon, was detained along with three students — Sabelo Dlamini, Boy Mabugu and Maphandlana Shongwe — and a lawyer, Dominic Magonzela, after they were acquitted last November of charges of high treason and of belonging to a political party, which are banned in Swaziland.

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As was the case with Mr Forbes, they are being held under a law that empowers the government to detain people for 60-day periods, which can be renewed indefinitely, without giving reasons.

But while Mr Forbes believed he was jailed to silence him, there is no clarity about why the others are being held.

The most likely explanation appears to be that there is a desire, in some quarters to discourage Swazis from agitating for a multiparty government rather than the all-powerful monarchy that now prevails.

Where does the king stand in all of this? Squarely in the middle, it seems, for since he has absolute power he must be assumed to have absolute responsibility.

Like his father, Mswati is guided by a group of advisers. But the identities of the advisers seem to be as obscure in his case as they were in his father's.

The allegations of Mr Dlamini, the MP suggest a new set of advisers might have replaced or joined the old group. He was fired and subsequent flight suggest in addition that they are not anxious for their identities or activities to be disclosed.

— Star 'Africa Service.
Pressure grows on Swazis

MBABANE — Outside pressure is increasing on Swaziland for its use of detention without trial legislation, with reports at the weekend that Amnesty International representatives are to visit the country this week.

Local newspaper reports at the weekend also said that the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions may advise members to boycott Swazi exports.

Foreign interest in the issue has increased since a United States condemnation of the legislation last week. A strong statement from the US Embassy was the first diplomatic condemnation of the detention law.

Six people are in detention in Swaziland; five of them since November. Four of these are currently in hospital being treated for the effects of a prolonged hunger strike, the latest of several they have staged.

The five including a lawyer and lecturer, were detained shortly after being acquitted of high treason and of belonging to an illegal political party.

The sixth detainee is a member of the royal Dlamini family, Prince Mngazidini, who was detained immediately after his acquittal on an unconnected charge of high treason in August. The prince has not taken part in hunger strikes.

However, as he was being detained at the High Court after his acquittal, he shouted to relatives that he feared poisoning, and asked them to regularly bring him food in prison.

Something rotten — Page 12
Outspoken, missing MP back home

MBABANE - A Swazi MP who fled his country claiming he feared detention without trial two weeks ago and sought refuge in Botswana is back home again.

Mr. Philip Dzingalile Dlamini had meetings yesterday with Prime Minister Mr. Obed Dlamini and officials of parliament, but would not say what was discussed.

However, he did confirm that he would be returning to parliament as an MP.

Outspoken Dlamini fled the country after a week in which he claimed in parliament that there was a shadowy group which holds more power than cabinet.

Fear 20/1/91

He also queried government spending on the army, a subject not normally discussed in the house.

After his flight he telephoned local journalists "from a nearby country" and said major local shareholders in the large sugar company where he is employed as personnel manager had told management to fire him.

In his phone calls Dlamini said he feared the next step would be detention without trial, so he fled.

Speaking yesterday after his meeting with the Prime Minister, he said Botswana authorities had been highly sympathetic and hospitable.

"The international community is aware of what is going on here, and of the violation of human rights that is taking place. "My return was also because of pressure exerted on government."

Job (2/12)

Dlamini said he had been assured that he would not be fired from his job, although after he fled his employers confirmed that they had been told to dismiss him.

The Prime Minister has said he knows nothing of allegations that the MP was to be detained without trial.

One of the first things Dlamini did when he returned to Swaziland was to report to United Nations officials here.

He did this, he explained, on the advice of UN High Commission for Refugees officials in Botswana.
Reconciling Africa is fraught with difficulties.
SWAZILAND has lifted the six year ban on City Press and sister publication Drum, Interior Minister Senzenjani Shabalala told the Swazi Senate this week.

Drum and City Press were banned after they published "certain sensitive and critical articles" about members of the once all-powerful Supreme Council of State, the Liqoqe, which ruled Swaziland for two years after the death of King Sobhuza II in 1983.

City Press has not yet been officially informed that the ban has been lifted.

"Once that happens City Press will immediately begin circulating again in Swaziland," editor Khulu Sibiya said yesterday.
Swazis pardon six detainees

MBABANE - Six political detainees held under Swaziland's Detention Without Trial Act, were suddenly pardoned by the king and released, conditionally at the weekend.

The six included former political strong-man in the once powerful Supreme Council of State (Likopo) Prince Mfana Sihili, who was jailed for seven in 1985 for defeating the ends of justice.

Immediately after his release last year the prince was re-arrested and charged with treason, but was acquitted by the High Court. He was then immediately detained under detention without trial laws until his release on Friday.

The other five detainees were arrested after serious student disturbances at the Swaziland University. They are academics and student leaders and alleged members of an underground political organisation (Pudemco) People United Democratic Movement.

The pardon and release of the detainees came a week after the United States and British governments joined the growing demand by international human rights organisations for the detainees to be released or charged and the scrapping of detention without trial laws. - Sipa
Detainee is held again after pardon

MBABANE - One of six political detainees in Swaziland, released under a royal pardon on Friday, was rearrested on Saturday after he was allegedly found wearing an army uniform.

Former student teacher Mr Maphandlana Shongwe was arrested in Manzini by soldiers and handed over to the Manzini police.

Shongwe was kept in the cells overnight for questioning concerning the army uniform and was released later on Sunday pending further police investigations.

Announcing the Swazi King's pardon on Friday, royal councillors warned the detainees to repent, go home and carry on with their own business and leave the running of the country to people who are there for that purpose.

Meanwhile the United States government in a statement issued from its embassy in Mbabane at the weekend, praised King Mswati III for granting the pardon to the detainees.

The release of the detainees was a significant step towards observance of internationally accepted human rights by the Swaziland government, the statement said.

The US government now urged the Swaziland government to abolish detention without trial and thus enhance respect for human rights and the rule of law in the country.

-Sapa
Swaziland re-arrests one of 6 released detainees

MBABANE — A Swazi political detainee released last week after being held without charge since November was back behind bars at the weekend.

This was after he was found wearing a Swazi army uniform.

Former student Maphandana Shongwe was released on Friday, with five others also in detention without trial, after King Mswati announced he had pardoned them.

On Saturday police confirmed they were holding Mr Shongwe again because members of Swaziland's army had found him wearing an army uniform.

Police said they would hold Mr Shongwe until he explained why he was wearing the uniform.

Yesterday the United States ambassador to Swaziland, Stephen Rogers, issued a statement welcoming Swaziland's release of the six detainees.

The statement said: "This marks a significant step toward a greater observance of internationally accepted human rights procedures by the government of Swaziland."

"We remain strongly opposed to the detention without-trial legislation, and understand it is under review by the Swazi government."

Mr Rogers two weeks ago issued a statement deploring the detentions.

Five of those released on Friday were Mr Shongwe, lawyer Dominic Msagala, university lecturer Ray Russon and students Boy Magula and Sabelo Dlamini.

They were all detained soon after being acquitted in November by the High Court of charges of high treason and of belonging to an illegal political party.

Mr Shongwe went home after his pardon was announced.

However, the other four, suffering from the effects of a prolonged hunger strike protest, went back to hospital for further treatment.

The sixth detainee was Prince Mfonashabili, detained in August immediately after his acquittal in an unconnected trial for high treason.

The prince took part in no hunger strikes, and went home after his release.

He immediately began preparations for the burial on Saturday of his wife, who died earlier in the week.

A local newspaper reported on Sunday that the five detainees, excepting the prince, had expressed their thanks to Prime Minister Obed Dlamini for his efforts in obtaining their release.

Observers said their statement pointedly did not mention the king, who actually ordered their release.
The day the ancestors were part of parliament

MBABANE - Senators in the Swaziland House of Senate on Monday apparently had their parliamentary privilege extended to sleeping in the house.

When Senator Arthur Khoza stood up and interrupted Prime Minister Mr Obed Dlamini during a budget debate to point out that some senators were sleeping, the president of the House, Mr Jacob Mavimbe, studied the sleeping senators in silence for several moments. He then rose and cautioned Khoza, saying it could be dangerous to suddenly disturb the senators concerned - including a Cabinet Minister - who could in fact be concentrating deeply on communicating with their ancestors.

He said if this was the case, and if they were suddenly disturbed during such concentration, they could die from shock. - Sapa.
In my opinion, any goods and services in hard currency cannot be converted into real assets and will lose their value. To reduce inflationary pressure, the government should encourage the use of local currencies. The expansion of economic structures and the reduction of import tariffs can stimulate domestic production. The government should also implement measures to attract foreign investment, which will contribute to the development of the country's economy. However, these measures should be accompanied by adequate fiscal policies to prevent inflation.

Pete Vale

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I won't allow political parties, says King Mswati

31st March 1971
Swaziland's Aids toll increases to 22

MBABANE — Five people have died in Swaziland this year from Aids, the ministry of health has confirmed.

Director of medical services Dr John Mhambo said four babies had been found with HIV infection, and were not expected to survive.

The report said 22 people had died of Aids since it was first reported in Swaziland.

— Star Africa Service.
MBABANE - Behind the post office at Lomahasha on the Swaziland-Mozambique border, a man opened a plastic bag and showed me three AK-47 assault rifles. He said I could have all three for only R70.

I knew then that I had succeeded in tapping into the smuggling route along which the deadly Soviet-made military rifles are entering South Africa in growing numbers.

And in South Africa, they have gained notoriety for their use in faction fighting, political killings, bank robberies and other crimes.

Lomahasha, the main border post on Swaziland's boundary with Mozambique, is the main conduit through which the guns are coming into South Africa.

Food
I proved that almost anyone can buy one there for a few rand.

The little dorp, whose name means "to itch", is described by local residents as "a bed of criminals and arms smugglers".

Arms smuggling from Mozambique to South Africa by way of Swaziland is big business for people who have been making money out of the killings in South Africa's townships.

There are two types of smugglers: the small, occasional dealers who may be regarded as amateurs in the business and the big players, the professionals.

The former are usually people who cross the border illegally from Mozambique into Swaziland with AK-47s looking for someone who will buy from them for as little as R20 a gun.

They then use the money to buy food before crossing back into Mozambique.

The big dealers normally travel into Mozambique to fetch arms which, if they can be smuggled past the Swazi police and army roadblocks, are sold in Natal and on the Witwatersrand for large sums - as much as R$ 6,000, according to the South African Police.

The source of the AK-47s, as well as Makarov pistols and ammunition for both, is reportedly the Renamo guerilla group fighting the Pretoria government in Mozambique.

The London newsletter, Africa Confidential, recently reported that Renamo had taken to selling its surplus weapons in South Africa to get funds.

However, my information is that Renamo as an organisation is not directly responsible for the smuggling.

Renamo
It is individual Renamo members who sell the weapons or exchange them for food, clothing, cigarettes and other goods.

I went to Swaziland to investigate reports that AK-47s can be bought for as little as R20 at Lomahasha.

The area near the border post was so congested with people and vehicles it resembled a bee hive.

Many people were carrying big bags filled with goods bought on either side of the border.

Most of the people crossing the border are Mozambicans.

I was met with great suspicion when I began questioning people about AK-47s. People did not want to talk to me.

I approached a woman who had just bought bread from a store near the border post. I gave her two pieces of chicken remaining from some I had bought on my way to Lomahasha and I bought her a cold drink.

This started a conversation that led to my meeting the man who called himself Alfonso.

Alfonso
"Talk to those people there," the woman said, pointing to Alfonso. "You should be very careful, though, because the police are always here."

I approached Alfonso, a Mozambican who said he had three children and no job and had to find food for his family every day. I told him I was interested in buying an AK-47.

"Are you serious?" he asked. I said I was.

He took me and my Swazi guide to an area behind the post office. We stood there for some time. It was obvious that Alfonso was trying to make sure that no body was watching us.

Then he opened the plastic bag he was carrying and asked me to look inside. I was shocked to see three AK-47s.

My mind was filled with thoughts of being arrested for arms smuggling.

"Give me R70 and take the lot," Alfonso said. "The police can come here any time."

I asked Alfonso where he got the guns and he said he usually gets them from Renamo soldiers in exchange for food.

"They come around to my place looking very tired and hungry," he said.

I told him about the roadblocks and asked how I could pass through them with the weapons.

"That is your problem," he said. "I need the money and the rest is for you to take care of."

I told him I was scared to buy the guns. I apologized and gave him R10 for his trouble. He took the money and left, obviously angry with me.

In Mbabane I was told by Swaziland's CID chief, Inspector Azaria Ndizamandze, that the police are aware that South Africans and Swazis can buy an AK-47 for as little as R20 and a Makarov pistol for only R5.

"We are aware that it is easy to get these guns, particularly with American dollars," he said. "We are also aware that Lomahasha seems to be the nerve centre of the arms smuggling.

Arrests
"We are obviously concerned about this and we are doing our best to crack it down, but it is not easy. We make regular arrests but what worries us most is that people are able to pass through the roadblocks with these weapons."

Inspector Ndizamandze said about 10 people were arrested each month with AK-47s and other smuggled arms as well as ammunition. He estimated that more than 500 weapons had been confiscated from smugglers so far this year.

"Obviously others go through," he said.

The smugglers used a variety of devices to get the weapons through.

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Inside the AK route

* From Page 6

Through the checkpoints, he said, and mentioned as an example a number of AK-47s found by police inside a false extension of the petrol tank of a van.

The inspector's admission confirms the assertions by the South African Police that many of the AK-47s being used in robberies and political killings in South Africa come from Mozambique by way of Swaziland.

A few weeks ago Lieutenant Colonel R Reynolds, the head of SAP public relations in Natal, showed journalists some of the more than 1 800 AK-47s and pistols confiscated by police in Natal since the beginning of the year, together with more than 50 000 rounds of ammunition.

He said the weapons had come from Mozambique through Swaziland to Weenen. From there they would be distributed in Natal and on the Reef, selling for as much as R6 000 each.

Swaziland is paying a heavy price for the smuggling. There has been a big increase in armed robbery, often involving the use of AK-47s. Guns are easily available in Manzini, Swaziland's second largest town, where it is now considered unsafe to walk the streets at night.

Lieutenant R Reynolds (right), head of the Natal police liaison division, shows members of the Press some of the 1 800 arms confiscated by police in Natal since the beginning of the year.
For sale: one AK-47
Price: R20

Behind the post office at Lomabasha on the Swaziland-Mozambique border, a man opened a plastic bag and showed me three AK-47 assault rifles. He said I could have all three for R70.

I knew then that I had succeeded in tapping into the smuggling route along which the deadly Soviet-made military rifles are entering South Africa in growing numbers, to be used in faction fighting, political killings, bank robberies and other crimes.

Lomabasha, the main border post on Swaziland’s boundary with Mozambique, is the main conduit through which the guns are coming into South Africa. I proved that almost anyone can buy one there for a few rands.

Smuggling

The little town, whose name means “to seek”, is described by local residents as “a bed of criminals and arms smugglers”.

Arms smuggling from Mozambique to South Africa by way of Swaziland is big business for people who have been making money out of the killings in South Africa’s townships.

There are two types of smuggler: the small, occasional dealers who may be regarded as amateurs in the business, and the big buyers, the professionals.

The former are usually people who cross the border illegally from Mozambique into Swaziland with AK-47s looking for someone who will buy them for as little as R20 a gun. They use the money to buy food before crossing back into Mozambique.

Renamo

The big dealers normally travel into Mozambique to fetch arms which, if they can be smuggled through the Swazi police and army roadblocks, are sold in Natal and on the Witwatersrand for large sums — as much as R1000, according to the South African Police.

The source of the supply of the AK-47s, as well as of Makarov pistols and ammunition for both, is the Renamo guerrilla group that is fighting the Frelimo government in Mozambique.

I went to Lomabasha to investigate reports that AK-47s can be bought for as little as R20 at Lomabasha. The area near the border post was so congested with people and vehicles that it looked like a beehive.

Most of the people crossing the border are Mozambicans.

I met with great suspicion when I began asking about AK-47s. People did not want to talk to me.

I approached a woman who had just bought bread from a store near the border post.

“Talk to those people there,” the woman said, pointing to a group. “You should be very careful, though, because the police are always here.”

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“Are you serious?” he asked. I said I was.

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Then he opened the plastic bag he was carrying and asked me to look inside. I was shocked to see three AK-47s. My head was filled with thoughts of being arrested for smuggling.

“Give me R20 and take the lot,” Alfons said. “The police could come here any time.”

I asked Alfons where he got the guns and he said he usually got them from Renamo soldiers in exchange for food.

Apologised

I told him about the roadblocks and asked how I could pass through them with the weapons.

“That is your problem,” he said. “I need the money, and the rest is for you to take care of.”

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In Mbabane I was told by Swaziland’s CID chief, Inspector Azaria Ndlimandolo, that the police are aware that South Africans and Swazis can buy an AK-47 for as little as R20 and a Makarov pistol for only R5.

“We are aware that it is easy to get these guns, particularly with American dollars,” he said. “We are also aware that Lomabasha seems to be the nerve centre of the arms smuggling.

Arrests

“We are obviously concerned about this and we are doing our best to crack the smuggling, but it is not easy. We make regular arrests, but what worries us most is that people are able to pass through the roadblocks with these weapons.”

Swaziland is paying its own heavy price for the smuggling in the form of a big increase in armed robberies, often involving the use of AK-47s. Guns are easily available in Masau, Swaziland’s second largest town, where it is now considered unsafe to walk the streets at night.

The anger of Swazis is being turned against the many Mozambicans in the country.

But the guns keep coming in.

— Star Africa Service.
political activity, but who had not been convicted in court of any offence.

At the same time, there are reports of friction between the monarchy and the Cabinet, and of public concern over what is said to be the growing power of a group in the palace.

The opposition to detention without trial, which has been openly joined by the United States government, led to the freeing of the five detainees last month.

The London newsletter, Africa Confidential, says in its latest edition that their releases came “amid mounting evidence of growing disarray within the government”.

“Its two arms, Cabinet and monarchy, are increasingly at loggerheads and public alarm has been rising as evidence emerges that enormous power within the palace is now being exercised by a clique known as the Central Committee.”

The newsletter says “the divide between the Cabinet and the monarchy is in large part, it seems, a response to the move towards political reform in South Africa and within the region”.

The sensitivity of the palace to murmurs of public dissent was shown by the harshness with which it reacted to those murmurs.

These were first heard just more than two years ago when pamphlets calling for democracy were circulated by an organisation calling itself the People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudemo).

Pudemo had been formed in 1983 to oppose the monarchy, but its members were often arrested and detained. Its pamphlets criticised the system of election to parliament, the building of a new palace for Sobhuza’s successor, King Mswati (which has never been reported in the local press) and alleged nepotism in the royal Diamini family.

The government took Pudemo’s activities seriously enough to charge 10 Swazis last year with being Pudemo members and with treason.

They were acquitted by the High Court but five were then jailed without trial.

They were released only 10 days after the third renewal of their 60-day detention-without-trial orders — after a public condemnation of the detentions by the US, which is Swaziland’s main aid donor, and a more discreet protest from the British government.

Their release came on the eve of the arrival of a delegation sent by Amnesty International to investigate the detentions.

They were taken to the palace — four of them from the hospital to which they had been admitted after going on a hunger strike — and told by a senior palace official that they had been “pardoned”, but were not told for what offence.

They were told to “go home and forget about the issues of running the country. There are people who are there to do that, and not you, our children”.

This paternalistic injunction seems not to have been accepted, for the detainees next day released a statement pointedly thanking Prime Minister Obed Diamini for their release.

This made the nation catch its breath, as it were, for it is widely known that although the prime minister signs detention orders, only the king has the power to impose or lift them.

The prime minister hurriedly issued a statement advising that any thanks should be directed to the king. But the former detainees had made their point.

And they emphasised it in a response expressing polite surprise and saying that since detention orders were signed by the prime minister, they had assumed he was responsible for issuing them.

Once again attention had been drawn to the personal power King Mswati has to detain his subjects indefinitely without charge and without giving reasons.

A Swazi who is close to the proposed formation of a human rights organisation in the country said that since a king had introduced the detention-without-trial law, only a king could remove it from the books, and pressure would now increase for King Mswati to do that.

If he did, the way would be opened for other changes that might loosen the firm, if normally benevolent, grip the royal Diamini family has had on Swaziland.

King Mswati may be caught between a desire — if not on his part, then on the part of other members of the royal clan — to retain absolute power and the need to placate foreign donors and investors.

Some Swazis saw a veiled threat that US aid might be curtailed in the statement by Ambassador Stephen Rogers that there was “no immediate plan” to halt American aid.

According to another London newsletter, Africa Analysis, even members of the royal court are urging that the detention-without-trial legislation be scrapped to ease internal tension and placate critics.

A crucial influence will probably be exercised in any decision on this issue by the members of the Central Committee. Two of the council members who are said to be Africa Confidential to be Abednego Hlophe, who was a member of the Liquoqo after Sobhuza’s death, and former Cabinet minister Sithaye Nxumalo, “arguably now the most influential figure in Swaziland politics”.

Recalling that the Swaziland Law Society has also come out publicly against the detention-without-trial law, the newsletter says the legal establishment’s unease with the situation in Swaziland has been heightened by the premature departure of Chief Justice Nicholas Hannah, who acquitted the five who were subsequently jailed without trial, and whose contract was not due to expire until the end of the year.
Swazi throne feeling the heat

The absolute powers of the monarchy in Swaziland have not been enough to save it from coming under both internal and external stresses, reports GERALD L'ANGE of The Star Africa Service.

SWAZILAND'S all-powerful monarchy is feeling the first tremors of challenge since King Sobhuza assumed absolute power in 1973.

The autocracy of the throne is being questioned most directly through growing pressure for the scrapping of the law that allows Swazis to be imprisoned without trial at the discretion of the king.

Demands for the abolition of the law grew from the arbitrary jailing of five Swazis who were suspected of challenging the monarchy's ban on party
The news of Bob Tucker's resignation might come as a shock to outsiders who know him only through his press statements and public appearances. But sources close to him are not surprised.

Recognized as a man of great vision and associates point out that in the past five years he has entirely succeeded in achieving one of his aims – positioning the Perms as the “People’s Bank” – the area where he believes its future lies.

And for him to stay on now when the Perms is about to become a “brand of Nedcor” and relinquish the great independence he has experienced in running his own show is not something they expected him to accept.

Bob Tucker has been something of a maverick in the world of banking, say colleagues. Unlike most other building society chiefs who eagerly sought a share-market listing, Mr. Tucker had no wish to take the Perm to the stock exchange or transform it into a bank.

It was only after being heavily pressured by the authorities that he agreed to a merger with Nedcor.

His philosophy, which emerged at a press conference yesterday, is that building societies should not have to be banks as this could influence their relations with their clients. In fact, he suggested that the time might come when more mutual building societies should be established.

Mr. Tucker has also been active in other fields.

He has been one of the sponsors of the Old Mutual and Nedcor’s scenario on South Africa’s future, which has drawn highly favourable comments, both locally and overseas.

Explaining the reasons for his resignation yesterday, he said technological and other factors required a closer association between the Perm and Nedcor.

It had become obvious that there had been some reconciliation between the two groups. “In many parts of the country we found our most intense competition cause from Nedbank, and that had to be resolved.”

It was the Perm’s executives who motivated his whole re-organization of that group,” he said. “I’m absolutely satisfied that the right thing is being done in the right way at the right time for both the Perm and Nedbank – to bring them together with a common management.”

He said the move would not affect the Perm’s clients.

“A banking relationship is very personal … People come to the Perm because they like the Perm’s management and we are not going to upset that relationship.”

Mr. Tucker said the work that the Perm had been doing to improve the socio-political situation in the country would continue.

The Perm has been recognized as having a very heavy commitment to social upliftment.

“That commitment was not Bob Tucker on his crony’s own, but of the whole management team which stays in place,” he said. He added that there was also a high degree of recognition the Perm of the importance of what he had been doing in serving the broad spectrum of South Africans.

Mr. Tucker said he did not yet know what he would do.

“All my energy has gone into doing what I understood to be the right thing for the Perm and Nedcor. I have no time to think about the future.”

But if his total commitment is to remain in South Africa and play the maximum possible role in bringing about changes in the socio-economic circumstances which are so urgently necessary.

“I will need some time to find out precisely what platform will do that from there and what base and what role I will play,” he said.

Nedcor had asked him to stay on as main director, which he had happily agreed to do, he said. It had also asked him to continue working with its scenario plan and things such as that.

He emphasised that he was absolutely no pressure for him to resign. Nedcor was willing for him to join it.

He said Nedcor did not tell him to stay at the Perm because it saw a bigger role for him at Nedcor.

He also did not want to lose at the Perm because he had “run his period.”

Mr. Tucker (44) is a law graduate and has three sons.

He is a keen sportsman in the context of Nedcor’s person and a commercial and this his work as South African scenario that he will do much in coming years to bring about a better South Africa.”

Bob Tucker … colleagues say he is been something of a maverick in the banking world.
Havelock Mine sold to SA’s CMC

MBABANE – Swaziland’s Havelock Asbestos Mine, which went into voluntary liquidation two months ago, has been sold to a SA company Consolidated Mining Corporation (CMC).

Under the ‘purchase agreement,’ signed in Mbabane on Tuesday by Swazi Finance Minister Sibusiso Dlamini and CMC chairman Gerald Rubenstein, the Swazi government has a 15% shareholding in the new company, HVL Asbestos Swaziland Ltd, which will operate under the name Bulembu Mine.

Rubenstein announced that Monty Schechter, had been appointed managing director of Bulembu Mine, which resumed operations on a limited scale yesterday.

About 300 workers will be employed during this year. More than 1,700 miners lost their jobs when the mine suffered a financial collapse.

Under the ‘purchase agreement’ the government will also purchase certain assets of the mine, including its housing estate and certain of the buildings. — Sape

Commenting on the trading performance, Lewis said that the lower landed catches, reflected in the results, was symptomatic of the whole industry. He added that the industry was facing a “challenging 1991 season”...with this year’s quota on rock lobster not likely to be fulfilled.

As a result, the higher earnings forecast made in the last annual review would probably not be realised. However, Ocean was expected to turn in a better performance in the current six months to end September. Lewis said.
SA donation for Swazi pupils

MRABANE — South Africa has donated R121 000 towards educational scholarships for pupils in Swaziland.

The donation was confirmed by SA Trade representative Etienne du Toit, who is based in the kingdom. Mr du Toit said R31 000 of the money would be for Swazi students at SA institutions and R30 000 would be used to help establish community schools in the kingdom.

He urged Swazi students in South Africa to return to Swaziland when they complete their training. There has been concern recently that many Swazis complete their training and then get jobs in SA. — Star Africa Service.
SA gives Swaz scholarships

South Africa had donated R121,000 towards educational scholarships for Swaziland pupils. SA Trade representative Etienne du Toit said this week. Du Toit said R91,000 would be for Swazi students at South African institutions and R30,000 for Swazi community schools.
MBABANE - President FW de Klerk and South African Cabinet Ministers met Swazi leaders for one-and-a-half hour yesterday.

De Klerk was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Fik Botha, and his deputy, Mr Leon Wessels.

The Swazi delegation was headed by King Mswati and the Swazi Prime Minister, Mr Obed Dlamini.
De Klerk and Mswati discuss the new SA
By Kaitser Nyatsumba Political Staff

LOZITHA PALACE (Swaziland) — Southern African countries had to group together and co-operate more closely in order to survive, President de Klerk said yesterday.

He said this was necessary particularly because of the emergence of a unified Europe next year, and recent changes in Eastern and central Europe and the Soviet Union.

Speaking at a luncheon in his honour at the palace, Mr de Klerk said the majority of African leaders looked forward to South Africa playing a meaningful role in African affairs.

In Swaziland on a one-day working visit, Mr de Klerk was met at Matsapha International Airport yesterday morning by King Mswati III and Prime Minister Obéd Diamini.

Mr de Klerk said South Africa's return to "regional multilateral organisations" was imminent and he looked forward to the day South Africa would be welcomed back into the ranks of African organisations.

King Mswati said there was now "a real softening of attitude" towards SA in Europe.

He had recently paid a 10-day visit to Europe in his capacity as both king of his country and as chairman of the 18-nation Preferential Trade Area (PTA) of southern and eastern Africa, and he had detected a great interest in South Africa.

He said he had assured the European Community of the PTA's eventual aim of forming a sub-regional common market.

He had also expressed the PTA's hope that South Africa would be able to join the PTA "as a powerful market force".

A senior South African source said Mr de Klerk was scheduled to pay an official visit to Lesotho today, but the trip had to be called off indefinitely because of the present political instability in that country.
MBABANE — The plan to establish a southern African economic union modelled on the EC received a boost yesterday at talks between President F W de Klerk and Swaziland's King Mswati III.

Foreign Minister Pik Botha, who has visited Botswana, Kenya and Swaziland in a bid to sell the idea of a unified development region for the African subcontinent, said: "The momentum is complete. The dream is now being realised.

"Nothing can stop it — the momentum is too strong."

After yesterday's talks the king told a banquet at Lobitha Palace that he strongly supported De Klerk's proposal for an economic common market.

Swazi king backs FW's regional plan

The 23-year-old king said that leaders of the nine-nation Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) and 16-nation Preferential Trade Area (PTA) of southern and east Africa supported his stance that SA should adopt a role as a "major sub-regional power" in trade, economic co-operation and development.

Speaking later, De Klerk echoed the call for the urgent establishment of an economic unit in the region which would help to boost foreign investment and economic co-operation across a wide front.
Swaziland switches sugar exports to SA

MBABANE — Swaziland is switching all its sugar exports to the South African port of Durban because of problems in shipping through the Mozambican port capital of Maputo.

Swaziland Sugar Association chief executive Derek Johnson said Swaziland had been sending 140,000 metric tons annually through Maputo, but now total exports of more than 450,000 metric tons would go through Durban.

Johnson told Reuters the decision had been made due to pilferage, derailments and deficient rolling stock and facilities at Maputo.

"Sometimes we didn't know if there were going to be enough tarpaulins to protect consignments at the port. Pillage in the 1989-90 season amounted to 10,000 metric tons," he said.

Swaziland Railways said services would continue to Maputo, taking coal, citrus and wood pulp for export.

The railway has also come under intermittent attack from rebels of the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo) fighting the government for the past 16 years. — Sapa-Reuter.
Swazi sugar exports rerouted to Durban

MBABANE — Swaziland is switching all its sugar exports to Durban because of problems in shipping through the Mozambican port of Maputo. Swaziland Sugar Association chief executive Derek Johnson confirmed yesterday.

Swaziland had been sending 340,000 tons annually through Maputo, but now total exports of more than 450,000 tons would go via Durban.

Johnson said the decision had been made due to pilferage, derailments and deficient rolling stock and facilities at Maputo.

"Sometimes we didn't know if there were going to be enough tarpaulins to protect consignments at the port. Pilferage in the 1989/90 season amounted to 10,000 tons."

Swaziland Railways said services to Maputo would continue, taking coal, citrus and woodpulp for export.

The railway has also come under Renamo attack. — Sapa-Reuters.
FW to visit Kenya and Swaziland

Political Correspondent

President F W de Klerk is off to Kenya and Swaziland — notwithstanding calls by the OAU foreign ministers this week for an intensification of all forms of pressure on Pretoria.

Mr De Klerk will head an entourage which includes four other cabinet ministers when he visits Nairobi at the weekend in a bid to boost trade and other economic ties with one of Africa’s leading nations.

The President’s support team is expected to include the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pik Botha, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr Org Marais, the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr George Bartlett, and the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Kraai van Niekerk.

The warming in relations between the two countries followed a visit by Mr Botha to Kenya and a reciprocal hush-hush visit by a senior Kenyan politician to South Africa.

SAA now has regular flights to Nairobi and South African tourists are for the first time welcome in Kenya.

Mr De Klerk’s visit takes place at the invitation of President Daniel Arap Moi.

The composition of the SA delegation gives a clear indication of the next targets for bilateral co-operation.

Mr De Klerk is expected to follow up his Kenyan trip with a visit to South Africa’s neighbour Swaziland early next week.
Swazi hotels
MBABANE — A South African group is back in the running to build two luxury hotels, costing a total of £400 million, in Swaziland.

The hotel project was announced last year, with the Sheraton group to provide management and SA-based Genesis Holdings the finance.

"Little was heard of the plan after that, although arrangements were made to move communities living on land where the hotels were to be built."

Yesterday, Genesis Holdings announced that funds had been raised. Sheraton had signed a 20-year management agreement and details would soon be finalised with the developers. — Star Africa Service.
Swazis set for trade boom

By DONNY Nxumalo

SWAZILAND is set for an investment boom, whose effects are to have an impact on the Preferential Trade Area (PTA), following 'King' Mswati III's tour of Europe.

Business sources said the King's tour would not only generate investment opportunities in Swaziland but would also benefit the PTA regional grouping, of which the King is chairman.

PTA activities were almost unknown to the ordinary Swazi entrepreneur until the King was appointed to lead the 19-member State organisation.

One of the immediate benefits of the tour would be the construction of two Sheraton hotels – at Siphetlana and Elangeni – at a cost of about R400 million.

In another development, a four-man team from the government development organisation Tshiyiyo Tshakanagwane, who recently returned from Europe, have announced that their search for investors had been successful.

Tshiyiyo's legal advisor, Nidumiso Mamba, said the trip would reap dividends soon. He said the delegation met Lonrho officials to discuss projects like air cargo services, newspapers, security, painting and agricultural projects.
Royal marriages link Swazis to network of allies

Love and marriage, says the song, go together like a horse and carriage. The Swazis seem to add a twist to it and say that the right kind of marriage can help to avoid a foreign relations miscarriage.

Marriage across the border in the upper echelons of society appears to be seen by the Swazis as a useful form of political glue to help cement relations with neighbouring states and political movers and shakers in those countries.

For example, King Mswati’s elder sister Manombi is married to King Zwelethini of the Zulus, thereby creating what some have called an “Inkatha bridge” and what certainly is a Zulu bridge.

King Mswati’s elder brother, Prince Thumbumuzi, is married to Nelson Mandela’s daughter Zenani, giving the Swazi royal house a strong link to the African National Congress — and perhaps, who knows, to a future South African Government.

Both marriages took place during the reign of King Mswati’s father, King Sobhuza, who when he died in 1982 at the age of 83 had had more than 100 wives and more than 60 sons, whose own marriages have given the monarchy familial links running deep and wide in Swazi society and perhaps even beyond.

Any Swazi who ever moves against the monarchy is going to have an awful lot of family to contend with.

Although he is only 23, King Mswati is following vigorously in his father’s footsteps, with seven known wives. The exact number is not known for certain outside the royal household, for the affairs of the royal family, unlike those of the British equivalent, are not regarded as public property.

All seven of King Mswati’s wives are from prominent Swazi families, which further consolidates the roots and branches of the royal family tree.

King Mswati has not yet taken a wife outside Swaziland but tradition seems to suggest that it is not impossible that this might be undertaken if it is considered to be in the interests of the nation.

Swazi authorities note that other members of the Swazi royal family have married into the Ndebeles of the Eastern Transvaal, the Pondos of the Transkei and the Hlubis of Natal.

In this way the royal family, and no doubt the Swazi nation which it represents, has made ties beyond the country’s borders whose political value should not be underestimated.

This is not to suggest that all these marriages were arranged simply for political purposes. But the broad mass of Swazi society may have reason to be thankful for them from time to time.

Swazi custom had nothing to do with the sight that greeted President de Klerk and his entourage during his recent visit to the kingdom: A traditionally-dressed dancer who went vigorously through his paces with a 40-gallon oil drum gripped in his teeth.

He didn’t have the whole thing in his mouth, you must understand; he gripped it by the rim around the top. And the drum was empty, of course. But anyone who has ever handled a 40-gallon oil drum knows that it is difficult enough to lift one with both hands, let alone with the teeth and they will have great respect for Shabangu, the dental dancer. At the very least they have great respect for his teeth.

Mr Shabangu is a member of the Sagla Senwiku dancing troupe, which accompanied King Mswati on his recent visit to Europe.

The oil-drum routine was not part of Swazi tradition, palace officials explained.

“It’s a variation he introduced himself,” they said.

Possibly for this reason, but more likely because it would have been difficult to stow in the luggage rack, Mr Shabangu was not allowed to take the oil drum with him on the trip to Europe.

It can surely be only a matter of time before we see him with his drum in a toothpaste commercial on the telly.
Stealing of sugar leads to transport dilemma

ROBIN DREW of The Star Africa Service reports.

The fate of the Limpopo railway line linking Zimbabwe with Maputo is in the balance, because of inefficiency at the port's sugar terminal and huge losses from theft.

According to the Beira Corridor Group's latest bulletin, Zimbabwe will have to decide whether to follow Swaziland's example and stop using Maputo for its sugar exports.

Last year the two countries lost 64% of their sugar exports amounting to more than 17,500 tons, worth R10.2 million.

The bulletin says Swaziland decided recently to stop using Maputo for its sugar exports, which has worrying and far-reaching implications for both Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

The sugar terminal can handle 700,000 tons. In previous years, Swaziland has sent out 400,000 tons and Zimbabwe 200,000 tons.

But because of the stealing, Swaziland reduced its figure to 143,000 tons last season and Zimbabwe sent out only 131,000 tons because of reduced harvests.

As a short-term measure, Swaziland has decided to export its sugar through Durban, South Africa is studying the feasibility of building a new sugar-handling facility at Richards Bay.

The bulletin says indications are that the new terminal, offering users efficiency and security, would be commercially feasible with Swazi demand alone. But construction would probably be assured if Zimbabwe elected to ship through Richards Bay as well.

The dilemma facing Zimbabwe is that until now, Maputo has provided the best option and is likely to become attractive with the expected operation of the Limpopo railway, which directly links the canefields in the south-east with the port.

But with the rerouting of Swazi sugar, the Zimbabwean sugar industry can expect significantly higher losses through theft. It could also find that without the existing volumes of sugar, the Maputo terminal would become uneconomical.

If costs and risks rise too high, Zimbabwe would have to look elsewhere, and Richards Bay would offer the next best alternative. But unless Zimbabwe makes a commitment now, no provision will be made in the design of the new facility.

The bulletin concludes: "The line's fate, in essence, depends on how Zimbabwe assesses Maputo's ability to implement a strategy which ensures that its sugar crop is handled efficiently and without loss.

"If this cannot be achieved, South Africa's ports and railways can reasonably expect a bonus."
Swazi 'party' tries to recruit pupils

Argus Africa News Service 4/7/91

MBABANE. — An illegal political party is recruiting Swazi high school pupils with promises of paying them R100 a month and opportunities to study abroad, a newspaper reported yesterday.

The paper said letters were being sent to pupils by the People's United Democratic Movement (Pudemo), which was at the centre of a treason trial last year. All seven accused were cleared of belonging to the party, but the judge said there were indications that Pudemo exists. Political activity is banned in Swaziland.

The pupils said they were asked to paint slogans on school walls in support of Pudemo.
FW at prayer festival

MBABANE - State President Mr FW de Klerk, Mozambican President Joachim Chissano and Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda are among the leaders invited to join Swaziland's King Mswati III at a weekend international prayer festival in the mountain kingdom.

The honorary chairman of the African National Congress, Mr Oliver Tambo, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Inkatha Freedom Party president Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi have also been invited.

- Sapa.
Swaziland CET 312
MBABANE — Another
batch of illegal immi-
grants, including Mo-
zambicans and South Af-
ricans, have been
declared prohibited im-
migrants in Swaziland,
and deported.
The 16 deportees were
deported this week
following the forced re-
patriation last month of
more than 300 illegal
Mozambican immigrants
rounded up during
police raids...
Detention, Swazi style

Argus Africa News Service

MBABANE — Foreigners do not understand the Swazi system of human rights, says Justice Minister Zonke Khumalo.

The minister was answering Australia's high commissioner to Swaziland, Mr Colin McDonald, who said he was worried by claims that Swazis were detained without trial.

Minister Khumalo replied: "Only Swazis understand why some people are jailed without trial."
Swaziland gets a bridge over troubled water

WOULD you believe that there are children in Swaziland who have to swim a crocodile-infested river to get to school?

The Mkhondvo River might not actually be crocodile-infested in the strictest sense of the word — although I personally would regard just one croc in a river as an infestation if I had to swim across it.

And swim across it is what the children who live on the wrong side of the river at Mkhutsini have to do to get to the school on the other side, says the headmaster, Ephraim Ntshanda.

He and other local residents say there are crocodiles in the Mkhondvo. And as it is the widest river in a country whose rivers crocodiles are not uncommon, who is going to doubt them?

Whether any children have ever been taken by crocs in the river I do not know. But this does not necessarily mean that there are none there, or even that no children have been taken.

Even without crocs, the children of Mkhutsini, which is in the Nhlangelizo District, have a hard time getting across the river. In winter the water is so cold that even if it is low enough to be waded some of the children become ill from repeated immersions, according to the headmaster.

"In the summer the children cannot get to school at all when the river is running too strong to be swum.

I offer this story to all the white South African mothers who have to put up with bleats and moans from their children as they are hauled and cajoled out of their warm winter beds, filled with hot breakfast, wrapped in woolies and dropped off at the school gates in the family car.

Your mothers could threaten to go and live in Mkhutsini, where the kids would have to swim the river to get to school.

But you had better do it soon, because it will not be long before the children of Mkhutsini will be crossing the river on a bridge.

Last week a South African helicopter began carrying R110 000 worth of building materials to the site where the bridge is to be constructed.

The materials are being provided by the European Economic...
Swazi groups 'have gone underground'

Star Africa Service

MBABANE — Four political organisations are working underground in Swaziland, where all political activity was banned in 1972, it is claimed here.

The claim was made by Swaziland university lecturer Ray Russon, who was himself charged last year with treason and belonging to an illegal political party.

After being acquitted of the charges, he and four other accused were detained without trial for several months.

Mr Russon made his allegations at a weekend meeting in Manzini where the formation of the Swaziland Youth Congress was announced.

The aim of this organisation is to promote the interests of Swazi youth.

Mr Russon did not name the four political organisations, but said that the no-politics ban should be lifted, and they should be allowed to express their views.

According to eye-witnesses, police in uniform and in plain clothes took notes as he spoke.

Others at the meeting said they had been given pamphlets about an organisation called the Ngwane Revolutionary Socialist Party, which said it was in favour of democracy, was non-violent, but would counter violence with violence.
Moshoeshoe may set up home in Swaziland

MBABANE — The former King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho has arrived in Swaziland amid speculation that he will seek residence in the country.

Moshoeshoe, who has been living in London since being dethroned by Lesotho’s military government last November, arrived yesterday on a flight from Lusaka.

There was no immediate explanation from the Swaziland government of his presence. Ostensibly he may have come to attend the annual reed dance festival, a traditional highlight of the Swazi calendar.

However, a source close to the Swaziland government told The Star’s Africa Service that the possibility of Moshoeshoe establishing a home in Swaziland might be discussed with the government during his visit.

Yesterday the former king addressed a group of loyal Basotho who had come from Lesotho to meet him. The meeting took place in a night club in the hotel where he is staying.

Reports that he was to be joined by his son, King Letsie III, who succeeded him on the throne, were denied by members of the Basotho party.

The reed dance ceremonies were being attended yesterday by King Goodwill Zwelithini of the Zulus.
Swaziland in a Country Dance

By Elias Maluleke

Swazi women — members of the king's regiment — make sure the shield is properly distributed before joining the dance. A rear view of these women at the Reed Dance ceremony above, while below a rear view of the Shift Ascension Board.
MBABANE - A ban on Press coverage of proceedings of a Swaziland special political review committee has angered the mountain kingdom's media.

Interior Minister Enos Mavuso announced the ban at a news conference on Monday. It came after sharp criticism of the present system of government at the committee's meetings.

The committee was appointed about three months ago and is touring Swaziland to obtain opinions at grassroots level about the country's non-party system of government.

Meanwhile, King Mswati III is in the United States explaining the review committee's objectives and activities. He had instructed the committee's proceedings should be made public.

The Times of Swaziland called the development a "boggling issue". It challenged the prime minister to clarify the measure. - Sapa
MANZINI - Multiparty rumbles are worrying traditional leaders in conservative Swaziland, which has banned party politics of any kind.

The kingdom was declared a no-party state in 1973 by the then monarch, King Sobhuza, who said that multiparty politics were divisive and the Westminster constitution left by the British at independence in 1968 unsuitable.

The decision did not meet much opposition at the time. Sobhuza was a much revered monarch, who had ruled since 1922. The Swazis have always been a united people, with one language and one culture and their king is the symbol of that unity.

But Sobhuza died in 1982, to be succeeded by his 18-year-old Mswati in 1986.

A diplomat pointed out recently that out of the kingdom's population of just over 800,000 today, 25 percent are between the ages of 15 and 30.

"This is a very vocal group in any country, and here they have been exposed to more education and knowledge of the world around them," the diplomat said.

"King Mswati has inherited an entirely different nation."

The king, now 23, has made it clear he intends to follow his father's ways.

When Sobhuza died in 1982, a supreme council of state, the Ligiqo, took absolute power as an interim ruling body. The 13-member Ligiqo made some highly questionable and unpopular decisions and soon after it took control an underground political party, called the People's United Democratic Movement, was formed to oppose its traditionalist and autocratic stance.

**Detentions**

It was a time of detentions without trial, removals from power and general tension.

King Mswati came to power in 1986 and immediately eliminated the Ligiqo, and it was assumed that Pudemo no longer had any reason to exist. But that was not to be.

Pudemo, whose leaders or even membership have never been identified, began demanding more freedom of speech, multiparty democracy, and even suggested the unheard of - that Swaziland should have a constitutional monarch, rather than an absolute ruler.

Three years after Mswati succeeded to the throne, slogans were appearing on school walls and pamphlets were being scattered in major towns at night.

The authorities decided to act. More than a dozen young people were rounded up and charged with high treason and with belonging to an illegal political party.

All were acquitted on the major charges last year, but almost immediately five were put in detention without trial under legislation that was introduced by Sobhuza in 1973 and which requires no reason to be given for arrest.

In March this year, after several hunger strikes, and public concern expressed by United States ambassador Stephen Rogers and Amnesty International, the five were released by order of the king. There was no mention of pardon.

One of the king's counsellors, Prince Mphica Msafwa, told the detainees: "Now, you all go home and forget about issues such as running the country. There are people there to do that, and not you, our children."

This patronising advice was not heeded, it seems, because four months later one of the former detainees, political science lecturer Ray Rusaon, told an inaugural meeting of a youth organisation that there are now four political parties operating underground in Swaziland.

Swaziland's young people, it seems, are no longer prepared to go home and shut up. - *Swaziian Correspondent*
Massive Swazi arms bust

MBABANE - A South African man who arrived in Swaziland from Mozambique has been found with the largest haul of arms discovered by Swazi police this year, a police spokesman has said.

He said the arms were found in a South-African registered truck which the man was driving when he checked in at the Lomahasha border post in north-eastern Swaziland.

Police would not name the man, but said he was 40 years old and was from Tsakane township near Brakpan. He will be charged with unlawful possession of arms and smuggling, they said.

The truck was carrying 16 AK-47 rifles, five commando rifles, a Star pistol, 14 AK-47 magazines, 658 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, 313 rounds of 9mm ammunition and six commando rifle magazines.

Kinross dead not forgotten

THOUSANDS of miners are expected to commemorate Health and Safety Day on October 1, emanating from the 1986 Kinross mine disaster which claimed 177 lives.

The National Union of Mineworkers said in a statement yesterday that the anniversary had been planned for the weekend and the first week of October.

NUM repeated its demand for October 1 to be declared a public holiday to honour workers who died on the shopfloor.

NUM also echoed earlier calls that the Kinross victims' families be compensated with "a just and fair settlement," as opposed to the R4 000 a family offered by the Gencor mining house.

 Salad & Seafood & Strawberries ALL R2195

• Heap your bowl high from Mile's famous superfresh salad bar.
• Feast on your favourite golden grilled fish, with prawns, calamari, mussels and all the trimmings.
• Then ... Strawberries and cream or ice cream.

SAPA
Swazis air their views

SWAZI citizens have been allowed to spend the past month criticising their government at no-holds-barred public meetings.

A commission appointed by 23-year-old King Mswati has been holding the open-air meetings to hear feedback on the unique tinkundla electoral system introduced by the king's late father King Sobhuza II 18 years ago.

There have been persistent reports of underground political operations this year, including recruitment at schools, colleges and the university.

Swaziland has been a no-party state since 1973.

Political observers say there is a significant upsurge in interest in multiparty politics is that a large proportion of the 800,000 population is between the ages of 15 and 30, educated, inquiring and well aware of developments in neighbouring countries and the world at large.

"A lot has been said that some people are speaking from underground, so it is for us to listen to you," said commission chairman Prince Masitseka Dlamini at its first sitting.

"This is your opportunity to criticise as much as you like, instead of speaking from the bush. Nobody will be arrested for speaking here."

However, Prince Dlamini's audience was well aware that six people, students and a university lecturer, are currently awaiting trial in November on charges of attending an illegal meeting.

There have been suggestions that some people fear the consequences of giving the commission, composed of powerful traditional leaders, outspoken views on the no-party system.

Towards the end of the commission's hearings, Prime Minister Obed Dlamini, speaking in his private capacity in his home area, appealed for reassurances on this issue. He said although he was not voicing support for a multiparty system, he hoped that those who did not would not suffer arrest or victimisation.

Prince Masitseka gave him that assurance.

The tinkundla election system was introduced in 1978, five years after former monarch King Sobhuza abolished the multiparty system inherited from the British at independence in 1968.

Sobhuza argued that multipartyism was unsuitable for Swaziland, as it promoted violence and corruption.

But after two elections held under the tinkundla system, this too is coming under fire. Under this system, voters in 40 tinkundla, or constituencies, elect at open ballot 80 representatives who make up an electoral college. Voters at each tinkundla simply walk through a roughly constructed gate.

This college of 80 people then sits in private to elect 40 members of parliament from outside their number. The king can nominate MP's from outside this group of 40 members of parliament in this way, and he appoints his prime minister and cabinet.

Critics of the college say because its members discuss appointments of MP's in private, most MP's find themselves in parliament without even knowing that they are being considered, or asked if they want to be MP's.

A number of MP's said at the last session that they had no idea how or why they had been chosen.

Former Prime Minister Prince Blackmpisi Dlamini has suggested that the person with the most votes at each tinkundla ballot should go directly to parliament, removing the electoral college stage.

The person with the second largest number of votes would be a stand-by, in case of illness or death of the sitting MP.

Prince Masitseka has compared the electoral college to the system used to elect the pope.

"Not all Roman Catholics participate in the election of the pope. He is elected by a group of people," Prince Masitseka said

Mr Majaha Dlamini, the deputy attorney general, speaking in his personal capacity, said parliament should have the power to make laws and not subject to the king, who has the power to veto any law under the present system.

Mr Dlamini also touched on the sensitive subject of political parties, saying: "For how long are we going to suppress them? If we suppress them by the gun, we will not succeed."

"The communists tried to suppress people without success, and they collapsed. Let's find a way to handle political parties," he said.

Justice minister Zonke Khumalo said these underground political parties were backed by former colonial masters who were using money to mislead Swazi children.

The tinkundla review commission is currently preparing its report to be presented to King Mswati for his consideration. It is thought unlikely that his study will be completed before next year.
Mbabane - Miriam Makeba is in Swaziland to publicise a charity concert to raise money for African children which will be held in Lagos, Nigeria next month.

The South African-born singer will hold a reception for Swazi cabinet ministers this evening to ask for support for the concert, which will raise funds for her organisation "Children of Africa".

She told local reporters the aim of the organisation was to use the talents of African artists to raise funds for Africa's needy children.

The concert is scheduled for November 30.

Sovetan Africa News Service.
'End maize monopoly'

MBABANE — Maize farmers, who this year responded to the Swazi Agriculture Ministry's call to grow more maize, now find they have huge stocks left which the National Maize Corporation cannot buy as its silos are full.

The maize farmers' representative in the Central Cooperative Union, Leo Dlamini, has confirmed that the corporation, which has the monopoly for the purchase, export and import of maize, has had to refuse further supplies.

The maize farmers last week bitterly complained they had to queue for several days and nights in their trucks at the corporation's depot at Matsapala waiting to offload and sell their maize because the corporation and its facilities could no longer cope with the tremendous increase in local maize being supplied by farmers.

The farmers have now urged the Agriculture Ministry to end the monopoly enjoyed by the corporation and to allow Swazi farmers to sell directly to local or foreign markets.
MBABANE - Swazi-land's foreign minister, in hot water for appointing his 28-year-old son to a top ambassadorial post, said yesterday Swazis are destructively jealous.

Foreign minister Mr. George Mamba's son Clifford, who had not previously worked in government, was last month named as ambassador to the European Economic Community. Mamba junior is a businessman.

Foreign minister Mamba said that the Swazi people are so jealous that they will always downgrade anyone who is successful - Sowetan Africa News Service.
Cautious steps towards democracy

Swazi citizens have been invited to criticise the "no-party" system
MBABANE - A Swazi politician was ejected from the Senate yesterday because he wore a T-shirt.

Despite his protest that the temperature was above 30 degrees, Mabalizandla Nhlabatsi was sent home to change.

Some male senators responded by asking why female senators were not wearing hats, as laid down in standing orders, but no action was taken. - Sowetan Africa News Service.
Education is equal to prostitution say men in Swaziland

MBABANE - Swazi men are preventing their wives from attending adult literacy classes because they believe “education” will make them prostitutes, it was reported here yesterday.

A senior official in the adult literacy programme, Mrs Emmah Disini, confirmed that the negative attitudes of men in rural areas had caused the closure of some classes, and accused husbands of sabotage in forbidding their wives to attend.

One woman in the eastern Lubombo region told a local newspaper that husbands fear the liberty and independence women will gain with literacy. “My husband said I should go forever if I learn to read and write,” she said.
MBABANE - Large numbers of refugees from Central and Northern Africa are arriving in Swaziland, which is already host to almost 100,000 refugees, mainly from Mozambique.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Swaziland, Mr. Christopher Thorne, said refugees from countries like Uganda, Zaire, Somalia and Ethiopia were mainly skilled or professional people seeking asylum as a result of political unrest in their homelands.
Swazi MP moved while abroad

MBABANE. An unexpected Cabinet shuffle in Swaziland last month caught one minister on the hop, travelling abroad.

Former Education Minister Chief Sipho Shongwe was made a regional administrator in the reshuffle on October 11 but he had left Swaziland the day before on a visit to Europe in his capacity as Education Minister, and has continued with his schedule of meetings. An education ministry spokesman said the ex-minister has attended a Unesco meeting in Paris, and has had talks in London with education authorities.

Chief Shongwe is expected home at the weekend, when he will report to his successor, Prince Khuzulwandle, and proceed to his new job as administrator for Shiselweni, south of Swaziland.
Elliott's on the move in Africa

By DON ROBERTSON

REMOVAL group Elliott International has acquired a majority stake in Swaziland Bearings.

This is its first expansion venture in Southern Africa. Swaziland Bearings distributes SKF bearings and seals. It has an interest in an industrial chemical and packing operation in Matsapha.

Elliott chairman Tom Ansley sees the acquisition as a promising diversification, but regards it as a "guinea pig" in the company's expansion into Africa.

Mr Ansley says that although it seems a strange diversification, bearings are transport oriented and the company services its own vehicles.

"The bearings business is a baseline from which to develop and expand into Swaziland. I am confident this company will soon be a force to be reckoned with."

Early next year, Elliott plans to introduce a removal and storage operation in Swaziland as well as enter the packaging market to produce paper, plastic and cardboard cartons.

"Swaziland has some interesting tax concessions, including a 37.5% corporate tax rate," says Mr Ansley.

The company is also investigating investment opportunities in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.
Post is still vacant

MBABANE - Swaziland's newly-appointed ambassador to the European Community, Mr Clifford Mamba (28), son of Swaziland's Foreign Minister, has still not taken up his appointment in Brussels. 10/11/91

News of his appointment as ambassador brought a storm of public criticism, accusing Foreign Minister George Mamba of outright nepotism.

Critics pointed out that his son had spent little time in Swaziland and did not know much about government or the country's political requirements.

He had little, if any, work experience and could not possibly represent his country at such an important and high level. - Sapa.
Under attack
Swaziland’s
tinkhundla

With only a year
Bunfight over leaked papers

Mbabane - Swazi teachers said yesterday a departmental directive ordering a rewrite of the mathematics paper by O-level students was impractical and unfair.

The initial examination papers were discovered to have been leaked.

The Swaziland National Association of Teachers has sent a letter to the Ministry of Education listing its opposition to the move.

Teachers' spokesman Madodzi Zwarne said it was impractical to recall students who had returned to their homes in Swaziland and abroad to sit again for the paper at the expense of taxpayers.

He said negligence on the part of the Swaziland Examination Council was responsible for the leak.

The leak was discovered during examinations last month when students in various parts of the country were found buying photocopies of the paper at between R10 and R30 each.
Cadbury plant is moved to Swaziland

CAPE TOWN — Cadbury-Schweppes is to relocate part of its Chapelet-Humphries sweet factory from Ntabeni to Swaziland.

The Ntabeni plant will be closed and various components relocated elsewhere to plants in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. The closure will mean the retrenchment of about 360 workers.

Cadbury already has a sweet manufacturing plant in Swaziland and is able to import sweets into SA at much lower prices because of lower Swazi sugar prices. This has been a source of dissatisfaction within certain sectors of the industry, which have had to labour under fixed SA sugar prices.

Cadbury group financial director John Buchanan said the Humphries plant would be closed by March as part of a programme to rationalise Cadbury's sugar confectionery business. There had been duplication and insufficient capacity following Cadbury's takeover of Chapelet-Humphries in 1989.

Management had negotiated a retrenchment package.
Mystery over missing minister

MBABANE – Swaziland’s recently-appointed Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr. Alfred Shabangu, this week left for Botswana, but officially, nobody seems to know why.

Shabangu was the leader of the country’s powerful teachers’ union before he was appointed to his cabinet post by King Mswati last month.

In Swaziland, royal appointments may not be refused.

However, according to the National Association of Teachers, Shabangu was in Botswana in his capacity as an executive member of the World Confederation of the Organizations of the Teaching Profession, and will attend the annual conference of the Botswana Teachers’ Union.

Secretary to the cabinet Mr. Alphus Shabangu (no relation) however said this week that he knew nothing about the transport minister’s departure.

"Before a minister can leave the country his trips has to be approved by cabinet," he said.

"A minister cannot just leave the country without his reference to cabinet," - Swaziland Correspondent.
Swazi Aids Workers Trained

Volunteer AIDS Workers Trained

Volunteer AIDS Workers Trained
Swazi visit to SA

A Swazi ministerial delegation is in South Africa to hold talks with President de Klerk, but officials will not say what the talks are about. But it is believed that Swaziland's claims to land in the KwaNdwane area and northern Natal will be discussed.
Slight drop for Lonrho Sugar

SWAZILAND-registered Lonrho Sugar Corporation, which grows and mills sugar in Swaziland, Malawi, Mauritius and SA, has reported a small drop in earnings in the six months to end-September after showing continued growth since 1988.

The group's earnings fell by 7.3% to 217c (234c) a share in the period, mainly due to "unseasonal climatic conditions in Swaziland," directors said.

The interim dividend of 100c a share has been maintained.

Interim results reflect half the estimated profits for the current financial year, and the 1990 comparative figures are half the actual profits for the year.

Directors said actual figures had not been given as they would be misleading "in view of the seasonal nature of the group's sugar operations."

The estimated figures show turnover grew by 8.8% to 208,1-million emalangeni (191,3-million emalangeni) and pre-tax profit declined by 5.4% to 51,4-million emalangeni (54,4-million).

Directors said this 5.4% drop, in line with predictions in the group's 1991 annual review, was mainly due to climatic conditions in Swaziland.

After taxation and minority interests, attributable profit was 7.2% down at 24,5-million emalangeni (26,4-million).

In the group's 1991 annual report directors expected a slight dip in profits in financial 1992 as the world market was in recession and there would be an expected surplus.
Toyi-toying among litter

MBABANE — Township rubbish clean-ups by a youth group in Swaziland, where all political activity is banned, has aroused the suspicion of the authorities.

The Swaziland Youth Congress organised clean-ups in the capital Mbabane, the industrial centre of Manzini and the town of Piggs Peak at the weekend.

During the “anti-litter” drive toyi-toying members of the group shouted slogans in support of multiparty democracy.

Congress leader Benedict Tsabedze was last year acquitted of belonging to the banned People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudem).

Mr Tsabedze at the weekend agreed that congress members opposed Swaziland’s one-party system, adding that the toyi-toying during the clean-ups was “a way of showing excitement”.

Police said they kept a close watch on congress members and would continue to monitor future clean-up exercises.
SWAZILAND - GENERAL

1992
Switzerland's dance to dissenting tune

Swiss voters find a unique way to show their opposition to the no-party system. They feature the country's only great for a multiparty democracy.

Switzerland's dance to dissenting tune

Swiss voters find a unique way to show their opposition to the no-party system. They feature the country's only great for a multiparty democracy.
SA, Swaziland talks to decide fate of sugar mill

THE fate of the proposed R1bn Nkomati sugar mill near Komatipoort depended on successful negotiations between SA and Swaziland concerning international water rights, sugar industry sources said on Wednesday.

And related to these rights would be the exact location of the mill and its two dams, the Driekoppies and Magugu, a Department of Water Affairs spokesman said.

The project would not only affect 240 sugar cane farmers, but also the economic climate of the Onderberg area and Kanyawane, the Transvaal Sugar Corporation (TSC) said.

Once the agreement had been signed, possibly in the first quarter of this year, construction of the mill and the dams would go ahead, it said.

The Driekoppies Dam, bordering Swaziland, should take about six years to complete, while milling would start in about three years.

The Magugu Dam would essentially be used for other crops, according to the TSC.

Rembrandt-owned TSC won the rights to build the sugar mill in July last year. TSC spokesman Riaan Plenaar said the total project would involve about R1bn, of which between R400m and R500m would be spent on the mill.

The mill’s estimated annual production would be 130 000 tons, requiring 30 000 hectares of cane, Plenaar said.

“Local farmers are expected to change crops once the sugar mill is viable.”

The Water Affairs Department’s Paul Roberts said the environmental and social aspects surrounding the mill had been given prominence by TSC and his department.

Roberts said there had been no ethical problems with environmental groups.
Plea to exiles

MBABANE — King Mswati III of Swaziland has appealed to exiled Swazis to return home and take part in national dialogue aimed at "mapping out the future political direction of the country".

The king's invitation to exiles was made known on his behalf on Tuesday by Prime Minister Obed Dlamini when he delivered his New Year's message in Mbabane. Sepa.
Swaziland facing worst drought crisis

MBABANE — The Swaziland Ministry of Agriculture has warned that the drought which is killing large numbers of cattle and ruining maize crops in north-eastern Swaziland could become the worst drought-induced crisis in the country’s history.

The ministry’s acting principal secretary, Mr. David Hlatshwako, re-emphasized a warning to farmers by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Themba Mavuso, to sell off some of their cattle immediately rather than have them starve to death through lack of pasture and water.

Tens of thousands of rural Swazis and thousands of refugees engaged in subsistence farming in the Lobombo district have also been warned not to waste water which is being supplied to them by water tankers from distant sources because most dams in the area have dried up.

The ministry has announced certain contingency plans under consideration. These include co-ordination of all remaining water resources in drought-stricken areas and the provision of watering points for communities and watering-troughs for livestock. — Sapa.
Swaziland wants free education

SWAZILAND'S National Association of Teachers has called on the kingdom's government to introduce free education immediately.

In a broadcast, the association's secretary-general, Madajina Zwane, said escalating fees had forced many children to drop out of school.

Zwane was reacting to a public outcry against the regular arbitrary raising and fixing of school fees by various institutions.
Uneasy lies the head that wears the Swazi crown

King Mswati of Swaziland is finding that there is a lot of truth in the old saying about uneasy being the head that wears the crown.

Caught in the middle of a political crisis that is splitting his people in two, Mswati, an absolute monarch, must take the decisions that will resolve the issue. But whatever he decides is going to be unpopular with one side or the other and perhaps even dangerous to himself.

On one side are the kingdom's conservative traditionalists who want the absolute monarchy to continue, and on the other side the young reformists who want a multiparty democracy.

The simple solution would seem to be for him to exercise his absolute powers and suppress the democrats with his loyal police and army, which have recently exercised such duties with uncommon zeal.

But Mswati knows that such a course would be strongly disapproved of by the United States, Britain and others among Swaziland's major aid donors.

It is in any case very unlikely that the security forces could stamp out the growing demand for a multiparty democracy. They would more likely provoke rioting that would destabilise the country even more than the kingdom's endemic corruption has already done.

Failure to suppress the democrats, however, could put his own monarchy at risk. At best, they would reduce his absolute power; at worst, they would install a democracy and abolish the throne.

Like President de Klerk, King Mswati is having to consider whether it is possible to share power or whether it can only be held absolutely, either by a king or a dictator or a ruling party.

The word from Swaziland is that he may be forced to make a move one way or the other very soon, for the traditionalists are said to be demanding that he get rid of Prime Minister Obad Dia-
mini.

The Prime Minister is widely respected in Swaziland as an honest and able man. But the conserv-

atives are said to consider him too sympathetic to the democrats. They remember uneasily that he was once a trade unionist.

Their fears were strengthened by a recent march from Maphumulo to the capital, organised by the youth group that appears to be associated with the multiparty movement. Ostensibly, the marchers were raising money for charity, but they were also doing the toyi-toyi and chanting political slogans, including some praising the Prime Minister and calling him "Comrade PM."

Conservatives may argue that the absolute monarchy has always been traditional in Swaziland, a custom interrupted only when the British imposed their constitutional ideas on the country. It may be said that King Sobhuza was only getting things back to normal when he abolished the British-imposed constitution after independence and assumed all powers.

The democrats argue, however, that such a feudal system is about three centuries out of date in the modern world and simply does not work any more.
Swaziland's capital caused delays as a demonstration disrupted traffic yesterday.

A group of people demonstrated against the government's proposed budget, which they said would hurt the poor.

The government, however, defended its budget, saying it was necessary for economic growth.

Source: Swazi Times
Swazi meat plant collapses

MBABANE — Hundreds of Swazis will lose their jobs this week following the collapse of the country's only meat processing plant.

A spokesman for Swaziland Meat Industries (SMI) confirmed the collapse, attributed to a shortage of capital.

The spokesman said efforts were being made to attract investors. SMI has major contracts to supply the European Economic Community. — Star Africa Service
Swazis amazed by man's return

MBABANE — Swazi police were astonished this week when a white man who was declared a prohibited immigrant 13 years ago walked through the Oshoek border post and demanded to be put in detention.

Later they said they would follow laid-down procedures and charge Peter Forbes (65) with illegal entry. If found guilty, Mr. Forbes would be sent back to Johannesburg, where he has lived since 1979.

Mr. Forbes, descendent of pioneers who settled in Swaziland in the mid-19th century, has argued since 1979 that the confiscation of his Swazi passport was a contravention of the UN's charter on human rights.

He explained yesterday: "I was instrumental in the establishment of a commission of inquiry into corruption in Swazi government circles. That offended people in power, and I was detained without trial."

"Then went on hunger strike and was eventually moved to a hospital in Johannesburg."

The former land-owner, says he was born in South Africa, but was brought back to Swaziland when he was seven days old.

Apart from periods of education in South Africa, he lived in Swaziland until 1979. — Star Africa Service.
Swaziland budget in deficit for first time

MBABANE — Swazi finance minister Sibusiso Dlamini yesterday delivered a budget in deficit for the first time, and warned of hard times.

Mr Dlamini anticipated expenditure for 1992/93 of R1,038 billion, exceeding R1 billion for the first time in the country's history. Of this the government would raise R966.5 million, leaving a deficit of R72.4 million.

The minister blamed the shortfall on an expected decrease in receipts from the southern African customs union, normally a major contributor to Swaziland's income, providing about 35 percent of revenue.

Mr Dlamini also warned that two major industries, Swaziland Meat Industries and textile plant Natex — are in financial difficulties and needed assistance.

Swaziland Meat Industries was this week put on a care and maintenance basis with 250 employees made redundant.

The country's only textile industry is also experiencing difficulty.

Mr Dlamini said R14 million had been provided to Natex by government and bank guarantees but this would be lost if the company collapsed.
Push for Change

Swazi Reformists

AFRICA
SwaZiland's major opposition movement, the umbrella organisation of People's United Democratic Movement (Pudemo) held a secret general council in January and then returned to Swaziland and unbanned itself. This was announced in a defiant message in the country's state newspaper, the Nation, by the newly elected Pudemo president, King Sambungo. Pudemo has been enthusiastically welcomed by opposition forces throughout the kingdom, particularly the Pudemo-aligned Swaziland Youth Congress (Swayco). Over the past six months, Swayco has emerged as an important political force, placing the state in an embarrassing situation by conducting widely supported nationwide clean-up campaigns, the banning of revolutionary songs, while significantly swelling its ranks.

Swayco has also held several marches in the major urban centres in defiance of an easing of state control which has existed in the country since 1978 when King Sobhuza II suspended the Independence Convention, downgraded parliament, banned political parties and introduced 60-day detention without trial legislation.

While in its infancy, there has been no official reaction from Pudemo's distant stand, it appears to have installed a de facto government in the country, which has resulted in a change of attitude on the part of the government. Police, military and others, have refused to be intimidated by student student attempts by thieves to steal minibuses during inter-university games a frame-up on which led to the death of a student who attempted to intervene, saw a march last week on the Manzini police station by students demanding the resignation of the commissioner of police.

While parliament has lasted, a new spirit of courage pervaded the galleries, as angry MPs called for the resignation of the prime minister over the issue. Swazi government leaders said in early February, after a sponsored walk that culminated in what they described as a major advance. There are currently four opposition groupings, all of which remain illegal — Pudemo, the Nyanga National Liberation Army (NLA), which was the founding pre-and post-independence opposition grouping, the Nyanga Social and Revolutionary Party (NswaM) and the London-based Swaziland Liberation Movement (Swilm).

Pudemo was formed in the winter of 1983 by disgruntled intellectuals, the majority of whom were students at the University of Swaziland (Uniswaz), which is the reflection of the aspirations of the founding charter, which resemble those expressed in the Freedom Charter. It was founded during a period of intrigue and intrigue to strengthen the military, with the fall of the palace, although it has fallen short of calling for a republican constitution, and seems to favour a constitutional monarchy.

For the first five years of its existence, it specifically distributed pamphlets which hit out at the excesses of members of the royal council and the undemocratic system of "no-party elections" under the tinkhundla electoral system. The system came into being in 1978, dividing the country into 46 districts. Elections are held in these districts every five years, but are non-party in character. The candidates, who are announced on election day, do not go to parliament, but from an elected college which elects 40 out of 50 MPs, and 10 out of 20 senators under the close supervision of the committee established by the king. The remaining MPs and senators are appointed by the king, and also appointed the king's pares. Pudemo's existence as an underground cell was transformed in late 1983 when police announced that a major crackdown on political dissidents was on the cards. In the months that followed, about 30 people were detained, 10 of whom were charged with high treason. The trial eventually began in October 1985, but within weeks came to a dramatic end with all Pudemo leaders being acquitted of charges of high treason.

Six of them were found guilty of the lesser charge of attending illegal political meetings, including general secretary Dominic Mgwembe and former Uniswaz student leader Ray Razak. Their sentences were later overturned on appeal.

The effect of the treason trial was to give Pudemo a public face. Since then the movement has gained ground rapidly, particularly in the urban areas among professionals, workers and students. In the capital, it has been able to hold regular meetings and to organise protests.

The post-recession period has seen the rapid metamorphosis of political life in Swaziland. Influenced by South Africa's United Democratic Front, Pudemo has moved to broaden its base to include the wider spectrum of Swazi society, most notably the Human Rights Association of Swaziland (Humsa) and Swatco.

The attempts by the Swaziland government to crack down on Pudemo were undermined in March 1991, when the United States intervened, linking the continued detention of Pudemo leaders, reinstated in November 1991, to the cancellation of aid agreements.

The freedom fighters, along with a growing voice at the center of royal intrigue, Prince Mfopotol, released and there were less than 60-day detentions since then.

With pressure mounting for democratic reform, King Mswati III announced in September last year that the tinkhundla system will be reviewed by the newly elected (governing) committee. Intended as an exercise to strengthen the system, the committee travelled countrywide, canvassing the views of ordinary people.

The king's unequivocal position on democratisation has been demonstrated by recent speeches. In his first speech of 1992, he warned Swazi against "the istitutionalisation for change," arguing that they should "not hurry to abdication long-held customs just because they do not want to be left out of fashion." In February, however, he seemed to indicate an about-turn during a visit to Zimbabwe President Frederick Chiluba. The king said he would maintain a state banquet that his government would not resist change, and that the nature of that change would be determined by the people.

In the meantime, Pudemo has presented the king with a five-point programme which it believes will enable the state to participate in the transition to democracy and for the establishment of an interim government; the fourth for the holding of a national referendum on the suitability of the independence constitution achieved by King Sobhuza II in 1973, and the fifth for the establishment of a constitutional assembly to perform the referendum reject the independence constitution.

Pudemo's February Congress rejected the process of constitutional review initiated by the king through the veiled committee, but the king announced a second veiled exercise on February 27. This time, however, he included a number of opposition figures in the committee, including former Pudemo president and current national organiser of the movement Manthabisile Chiswani, along with (Prime Minister) Michael Makumbe, and an established political figure, Arthur Khoza, who has publicly opposed the tinkhundla system and called for a review. The revision, however, remains heavily biased with conservative views.

All indications are that the tinkhundla's election due in November will not go ahead, although the terms of reference for "veiled 2" essentially to investigate whether it is consistent with democratic norms and to ensure that multi-party elections will only be won through further struggle.

While Pudemo is well placed to make substantial gains in the urban areas, it has still to demonstrate a rural constituency, although Swayco has established branches in some rural areas. Its focus on the central city and the capital, as well as the mistake of many African pro-democracy forces, failed to give the government an effective political voice, as the Swazi people, including many Pudemo leaders, are far from being excluded from the process of constitutional reform. Pudemo hopes to have a new constitution and the restoration of rights to the people, and to gain independence in 1998.

Pudemo would do well to add a land and agrarian programme to its existing economic policy paper, if it seriously wishes to undertake the struggle for democratic reform, and the king's substantial rural support base.

Richard Levin is a senior lecturer in the sociology department of Wits University.
Swazis desperate for maize

Star Africa Service

MBABANE — Almost 30 percent of the population of Swaziland is suffering the effects of drought, and needs 40,000 tons of maize to survive, according to the agriculture ministry. The ministry said 250,000 of Swaziland's 800,000 people will need food aid in the coming year.
Zambia finds itself falling to new heights

THE buzzword in Zambia today is one you will not find in the dictionary. But every Zambian knows that kacha refers to the new style that has taken hold since Kenneth Kaunda fell from his dusty pedestal and was replaced as president by breezy little Frederick Chiluba.

The word started out as "culture" but quickly became corrupted to something that slips easier off the local tongue. In part the new culture - sorry, kacha - stems from the diminutive stature of the president, who barely tops four feet.

Thus, nobody calls dummies dummies any more in Zambia. If you should find yourself in a bar in Lusaka and you want a small bottle of beer you will get much quicker service, I am told, if you do not ask for a dummy. Ask instead for a presidential size beer and a dummy will come whipping over the counter almost before you can say please.

Likewise, it has become fashionable to refer to all short people as "presidential heights". Alternatively, they may be called ka chiluba. In the same way, dummy beer bottles are sometimes referred to as fa chiluba.

The president's image has not suffered even from the fact that his wife, Vera, towers above him. It is not uncommon for husbands, especially when their wives are very large, to refer to them not as "my wife" but as "my Vera", or "my first lady".

Just as the president makes the best of his smallness, his wife flaunts her huge size, favouring colourful dresses, big hats and sunglasses.

There is an exuberance to the new culture that probably reflects a sense of freedom, of release from bonds.

I am told that suddenly people are doing things that they were afraid to do before, like criticising the government and standing up to police bullies - and suing each other in the courts. Just why they have taken to litigation is a bit of a mystery.

Although they are supposed still to be illegal, political parties have started sprouting like spring buds in the warmer political climate now prevailing in Swaziland.

Three have popped up in succession. And, believe it or not, all are led by men named Shongwe.

First there was Kistone Shongwe, president of the Peoples United Democratic Movement (Pudemo), who is a lawyer who has the added distinction of being a graduate of Swaziland's detenique without-trial system.

After him came Matsapa Shongwe, leader of the Swaziland United Front. He is a Christian preacher whose party is believed to have links with the Kangwane homeland in South Africa.

Recently Elfmond Mpho Shongwe, a businessman from Manzini, made his debut as president of the Swaziland National Front.

But that is not all. Mphandia Shongwe is a prominent official in the politically vocal Swazi Youth Congress.

None of the four Shongwes is related by blood. Knowledgeable Swazis say it is not uncommon for people named Shongwe to rise to prominence in political activity of one kind or another. Perhaps, it has something to do with genes.

A more prosaic explanation that is offered is that the Swazi are a small nation with relatively few family and clan names. For instance, an extraordinarily large number of them are called Dia-miini, which is the royal clan. They fill nine of the 54 pages in the Swaziland telephone directory.

But that still doesn't account for all those political Shongwes...
MBABANE - Coca-Cola has decided against returning to South Africa, the major concentrate-making plant it moved to Swaziland in 1987 because of anti-apartheid sanctions. Instead, the company is to spend R20-million on expanding the Swaziland plant, almost doubling its investment in the kingdom. The move was announced yesterday by Coca-Cola's world vice-president, Mr George Gourlay, after a meeting with King Mswati.
Democracy is catching

Emboldened by moves towards democracy across Africa, especially the example of the Convention for a Democratic SA, Swaziland opposition groups have suddenly begun to surface. This is in open defiance of emergency rule imposed 19 years ago.

But King Mwati III (23), shows signs of handling demands for a multiparty system based on a modern constitution in a positive and dignified manner. This suggests a Swazi-style transitional process is in the offing—one which is unlikely to cause any major upheavals in the small kingdom.

The past two months have seen the re-emergence of the main opposition group, the People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudemo), and the launch of two new, much smaller political entities: the Swaziland United Front and the Swaziland National Front (SNF).

Only Pudemo, a reincarnation of the old Ngwane National Liberation Congress (NNLC, banned in 1968) of veteran opponent Ambrose Zwane, has a history and a significant membership base. Pudemo is led by its president, Kistion Shongwe, a former NNLC man and ex-civil servant who claims to have founded the movement in 1983. That was the year he was detained by the infamously Liqozo clique, which had hijacked the royal council in the interregnum following King Sobhuza’s death.

But the two new parties appear to be climbing on the bandwagon. They have few members and no track record.

The SNF is led by Mbo Shongwe (no relation to Kistion) and Glenrose Diamini. It is a faction that broke away from Pudemo on a stronger free enterprise platform, though observers believe this has more to do with ambitions and personality differences than ideology.

Pudemo started making its voice heard about two years ago when it clandestinely distributed pamphlets calling for democratic reforms. Their language tended to be shrill and socialistic but their demands are essentially reasonable.

Thus Pudemo favours a constitutional monarchy in which the monarch is above politics — as in Britain — and executive power is vested in the prime minister. It recently indicated favouring a free enterprise economy. While the movement is thought to be strong in urban areas, it remains to be seen whether rural people would vote for Pudemo or for a party that might well be formed around the royal family.

Allied to Pudemo is the Swaziland Youth Congress (Swyaco), which provides the brawn of the movement. It has been able to operate all along since it is technically not a party and it is frequently in the news because of its defiant methods.

Pudemo also has links with the ANC, which is rumoured to have funded Pudemo’s national conference held in Johannesburg last month. Days later, on February 25, Pudemo “unbanned” itself by holding its first public meeting in Swaziland. It demanded a referendum on multiparty democracy, the lifting of emergency rule and the unbanning of political parties.

“What we want to have established is whether the people want a complete change to multiparty democracy,” a Pudemo statement said. “We believe that public discussion over the past few months has proved beyond doubt that the nation rejects the present system.”

A day after Pudemo came out into the open, an 11-member committee was appointed by the king to go into the question of restructuring the electoral system and make recommendations for constitutional change. At least one Pudemo member, Mandla Hlatuwayo, is on this potentially path-breaking committee.

The traditionalist authorities have so far taken no action against the parties. They are being cautious, in part no doubt because repressive rule has gone out of fashion.

More important, though, is that the young king is instinctively progressive and is thought to want to evolve a new democratic arrangement in which his position is precisely defined.

However, the king has to contend with a group of self-serving traditionalists who surround him. Fortunately, it seems that Prime Minister Obed Diamini, who is also in charge of the police, is more in step with the king; he is honest, respected and a progressive leader in his own right.

Onepointer to change was signalled by the king early this year when he handed over the chairmanship of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) to Zambia’s newly elected President Frederick Chiluba.

The occasion gave Mwati the opportunity to talk about change. He congratulated Chiluba on winning the Zambian elections and said Swaziland would also change — in a way that would “reflect the will of the people.” Chiluba responded by saying that Swaziland is managing to change without losing its traditions.

That probably sums up the course of events to come.
Swaziland PM aware of plot to oust him

MBABANE - Swaziland's prime minister says he is aware of powerful elements close to the king who are working to oust him from office, a newspaper reported yesterday.

A Swazi daily newspaper quoted Mr Obed Dlamini as saying the elements, members of an advisory body to King Mswati, wanted him removed because he had not acted against those responsible for the surfacing of political parties and movements in defiance of a ban imposed by the 29-year-old state of emergency.

Dlamini said he was not worried about the plot, adding as he had not applied for the job, the authorities could always dismiss him if they were not satisfied with his performance. - Sapa
They want to oust me, says Swazi premier

MBABANE — Swazi Prime Minister Obed Dlamini has agreed that powerful traditionalist elements would like to have him dismissed.

Mr Dlamini told a local newspaper that there were "elements" who were working for his removal. The newspaper suggested that traditionalists suspect him of sympathising with the aims of two illegal Swazi political parties.

Another claim is that traditional elements are annoyed with Mr Dlamini because of his refusal to sign detention orders against opponents of the political system.

The Prime Minister said yesterday: "I wish my critics would inform the King ... so the nation can be told about my dismissal." — Star Africa Service.
19 Aids deaths in Swaziland

MBABANE — Nineteen people, seven of them children aged under four, died from Aids between January 1 and March 31 in Swaziland.

The figure, released by the director of medical services, Dr John Mbambo, is the largest recorded over any three-month period.

The latest statistics were described by Dr Mbambo as “a bigger tip of the iceberg”.

In December Swaziland Aids worker Wezi Dlamini told doctors that a total of 26 people had died as a result of the disease since records began in 1985.

Dr Mbambo said in the first quarter of this year 26 cases of full blown Aids, 12 children and the majority of the remainder women, were reported.

The total population of the tiny mountain kingdom is only 800,000.
Royal wife raises Swazi eyebrows

EUNNIES from the winds of change that are blowing through Swaziland have wafted even into a part of the royal palace that was once considered absolutely wind-proof: the secluded little world of the royal wives.

The news that one of King Mswati's wives had made a public speech at the opening of a creche startled many Swazis. It was the first time that any of the royal wives had emerged from their matrimonial cloisters to officiate at a public function and it was widely seen as something in the nature of a straw in the wind of change.

For years the Swazi monarchy has been even more secretive than its British counterpart about its private affairs (which may be wise, considering the savaging that the British royalty gets from its press). The public was not considered to have any interest, or any right to take an interest, in even so notable an event as a royal wedding. Whenever King Mswati got married — and he has done so seven times so far — it was not considered necessary to inform his subjects beyond a terse communiqué that was about as informative as a wedding notice in The Star classifieds.

This was in keeping with a tradition that has long held, in effect, that affairs of the palace, and even affairs of state, are no concern of the public. The king and his advisers were considered to know best what was good for the people and they must be left to run the people's affairs accordingly.

It was in the spirit of this paternalistic tradition that King Sobhuza banned party political activity soon after independence. And it was in the same spirit that a senior member of government last year told parliament that it was un-Swazi to question the right of the royal Dlamini family to rule the country.

The demand for democracy has nevertheless grown louder, especially among younger Swazis, and the monarchy has felt obliged to react by setting up a kind of advisory body to look into the issue.

The winds of change have not, however, blown open any windows in the palace, figuratively speaking. Beyond that rare and so far unreported public appearance by one of the seven wives, the public remains largely ignorant of what goes on in the palace. Many do not even know what it looks like, or even exactly where it is.

Following tradition, Mswati ordered a new palace built when he was crowned in 1983. The design, designed by South African architects and built by South African contractors, has been growing slowly but, according to some reports, spectacularly, about 10 km north of Mbabane in the Ngwena region.

My own efforts to find out what the palace looks like have been rebuffed by the monarchy's minions, but it is said to incorporate some quite remarkable features. One of these is said to be a glass-bottomed indoor swimming pool that is suspended above a lounge so that the king may, if he wishes, recline at his ease and listen to rock music while watching his guests cavorting in the water above his head.

My request for information was rejected by the palace even though the architect had said he was willing to give it if the king gave him permission. My guess is that the request never got anywhere near the king. But it was perhaps too much to expect that it would. After all, how much do we know about the inside of Buckingham Palace?

If the winds of change have not opened up the palace they appear to have begun blowing up some strange things elsewhere. It is now reported that one of the leading figures in the demand for multiparty democracy has been arrested and charged with running a Fagin-like operation in which the thieves, instead of picking pockets, burgled homes and shops. The news astounded close associates of the man and immediately aroused suspicions that it was a "planted" charge aimed at discrediting him and ending his challenge to the reign of the Dlamini.

The courts will now have to decide and it will be a trial that will be followed with intense interest in Swaziland.□
Swaziland looks at new distribution

democracy

Claim for

democracy

B NIEF: ART

by JUNE

32

after 24/792
Call for national referendum in Swaziland

MBABANE — A leading Swazi opposition group called yesterday for a referendum on the country’s no-party system and said it would boycott a forum organised by King Mswati to discuss possible reforms.

Dominic Magomezulu, secretary-general of the People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudemo), said the so-called Vusela Committee appointed by the king last year to informally canvass the public’s views did not go far enough.

“Vusela does not address the national question. It takes place in an atmosphere of fear,” he said. “The situation requires a referendum to decide which way the country has to go.”

Pudemo is one of three underground parties which recently surfaced, despite a ban on political activity, calling for a multiparty system.

The king at the weekend condemned divisive political elements which he said were destroying the unity of the Swazi people. — Sapa-Reuters.
Deportation over Swazi theft probe

MBABANE — A South African private investigator was deported from Swaziland because his investigations into car thefts allegedly showed Swazi police involvement.

The Swaziland Observer newspaper yesterday reported that Leonard van der Merwe was sent to Swaziland by a South African insurance company to investigate a racket involving stolen South African cars being sold in Swaziland.

The newspaper said it had a copy of Mr van der Merwe's affidavit, which lists 209 stolen cars, some of which were allegedly in the possession of Swazi police officers, including the commissioner of police, who was an assistant commissioner at the time.

The newspaper, which said it planned to publish the complete list today, said Mr van der Merwe's investigations showed so much fraud and theft that the police began proceedings which led to his deportation. — Saps.
Swazis hold ANC men 'en route for training'

PRETORIA — The Department of Law and Order will approach the Swaziland police for assistance after the arrest of 32 African National Congress members in the mountain kingdom, SABC radio news reports.

Yesterday Swaziland police confirmed they had arrested 32 men claiming to be ANC members travelling to Tanzania for military training. The police said the men would be deported to South Africa from Big Bend, where they were being held.

A spokesman for the South African Department of Law and Order said he had not received confirmation of the arrests, but the Swaziland authorities would be approached as soon as possible to help the SA Police in their investigation.

If the arrests could be verified, the matter would be raised at Codesa on Monday.

Minister of Law and Order Hermus Kriel had repeatedly warned against actions that were contrary to the spirit of Codesa and the National Peace Accord, said the spokesman. — Sapa.
Swazis hold ‘ANC soldiers’ (312)
MBABANE — Swaziland police have confirmed they have detained 32 South African men claiming to be members of the ANC on their way to undergo military training in Tanzania. The men were being held at Big Bend in eastern Swaziland pending their deportation back to South Africa. The arrested men had entered the country in groups and had been taken to a refugee centre at Mpakana where they became violent when Swazi and UN High Commissioner for Refugees authorities refused to fund their onward journey, police said. — Sapa
Swaziland to expel MK recruits

By DE WET POTGIETER

THE 33 ANC recruits arrested in Swaziland on their way to Tanzania for military training will be extradited to South Africa. A senior SA Police officer said yesterday the men had been recruited by a woman in Durban and came from Kwa Masku. All the men are in detention at Big Bend. They were arrested on Friday after they crossed the border into Swaziland and applied for political asylum. They asked the UN Human Rights Commission for financial support to get to Tanzania. Their requests were turned down.

A spokesman for Minister of Law and Order Hermann Kriel said he was "deeply concerned" about the arrests. He is expected to raise the question of continued MK recruitment at Cofesa tomorrow.

ANC spokesman Gill Marcus said: "It is no secret that the ANC is training people abroad."
SA to seek help after 32 ANC arrested

SA Press Association 112

THE Law and Order Ministry will approach the Swaziland police for assistance following the arrest of 32 African National Congress members in the kingdom.

Swaziland confirmed the arrests on Friday and said the men would be deported to South Africa from Big Bend where they were being held.

The men claimed to be ANC members en route to Tanzania to receive military training.

In reaction, a spokesman for South Africa's Ministry of Law and Order said he had not received confirmation but that the Swaziland authorities would be contacted to help the SA Police investigate the report.

He said the matter would be raised at Codesa as soon as the detentions were verified.

Law and Order Minister Mr Hermus Kriel had repeatedly warned against actions that were contrary to the spirit of Codesa and the National Peace Accord, said the spokesman.
ANC' group still held in Swaziland

Johannesburg — Swaziland police yesterday still holding 32 alleged ANC members reported heading for Tanzania for military training.

Police spokesman Inspector Azaria Ndzimandze said the men were being held at Big Bend in eastern Swaziland, pending their deportation to South Africa.

The head of the UN High Commission for Refugees, Mr Gary Perkins, said the 32 were schoolboys from Durban — aged 16 to 18 — and had sought assistance from the agency to travel to a third country, but the agency had turned them down. He said they had apparently paid R150 each to be transported to the border. "Possibly there is an element of fraud," he said.

The youths were picked up when they entered Swaziland without proper documents.

In another development yesterday, a spokesman for the Prime Minister's office in Mbabane said his government did not recognise ANC members as political refugees.

The ANC has said the 32 are not members of the organisation.

The South African Law and Order Ministry said at the weekend it would raise the issue at Codesa. — Sapa
Second ‘ANC group’ in Swaziland

MBABANE — A group of 13 youths claiming to be ANC members en route to Zambia or Tanzania for military training arrived in Swaziland on Monday night.

The youths are being kept under police supervision in the southern town of Big Bend. A police spokesman described the youths, who range in age from 16 to 20, as “very arrogant and threatening violence if they don’t get what they want.”

The ANC denied the 32 youths were members. — Sapa.
Kentucky strike declared illegal by Cape judge

THE Cape Town Supreme Court yesterday ordered that a strike by South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union members at Kentucky Fried Chicken countrywide is illegal.

The owner of 22 Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets had applied to the court for an interdict restraining staff members from striking.

SJ and MM Hilcove CC, owners of 22 Kentucky fast food outlets in the Western Cape, the Transvaal and Natal, asked the court to declare industrial action at some branches illegal and to order workers back.

In an affidavit Mr Stuart Hilcove, managing member of SJ and MM Hilcove CC, said the strikers had illegally taken action.

Baffled Swazis hold 13 more youths

MBABANE - More young South Africans claiming to be members of the African National Congress have arrived in Swaziland demanding to be sent to other countries for military training.

Swazi authorities were baffled in April when a group of 32 youths arrived in the eastern border town of Sbecki saying they were ANC members who wanted to be sent to Zambia.

Swazi authorities explained that they could not be granted refugee status because the ANC had been unbanned and talks were going on.

The group refused to return to South Africa and are being held after trying to hijack a government truck to drive to Mozambique.

A police spokesman said yesterday: “Last weekend another group, about 13 of them, turned up also asking to be sent for military training. They are now waiting at the town of Big Bend for Interior Ministry officials to explain the situation to them.

“All those who have arrived are between 16 and 20 years old. We think they came from Natal.”

A United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman said last week: “The UNHCR is not involved in sending South Africans to third countries from Swaziland.

“In fact, we are engaged in a programme to repatriate South Africans who fled the country as political refugees back to the Republic.”
Swaziland grows louder in democracy call
UN doubts 'ANC'-boys

THE head of the United Nations agency for refugees in Swaziland yesterday expressed doubts that 45 South African youths being held in the country were bona fide members of the ANC.

Mr Gary Perkins said: "They are being told to contact Swazi police and the UNHCR for assistance to go to a third country," he said.

Swazi police had been unable to trace people involved in the youths' illegal entry in Swaziland, he said.

The ANC has distanced itself from the youths. - Sapa
Death threat for Swazi Minister

MBABANE - A Swazi Cabinet Minister, who was this week reported to have been pestered by men who wanted to steal his bath towel, yesterday said he had received death threats.

Transport and Communications Minister Mr Albert Shabangu caused controversy soon after his appointment early this year when he raised the fine for abuse of government vehicles from R60 to R4,000.

Sources at his Mbabane home said at the weekend that two men had made repeated attempts to obtain his bath towel, first by saying they had been sent by him to collect it and then by trying to buy it.

Shabangu’s maid said the two offered her R2,000 if she would give them the towel, but she refused.

There was wide speculation in Swaziland that the men wanted to harm Shabangu and had been advised by a sangoma to get his towel so that “muti” could be used on it.

Police

The incident was reported to the police and yesterday Shabangu said he had received calls about the towel incident, together with death threats. He said the caller told him his maid had saved his life by refusing to hand over the towel.

Teacher

Shabangu is a former teacher and was a forceful leader of the teachers’ trade union before he became a Cabinet Minister.

Police said yesterday they are investigating the matter.
ANC to help return youths home to SA

MBABANE - An ANC delegation has told the Swaziland government it will co-operate in repatriating youths who arrived in that country demanding to be sent to Zambia for military training.

The arrival of the 47 youths, all claiming to be ANC members, baffled the Swaziland government and refugee officials in Mbabane because the practice of sending political refugees abroad for military training ended when the ANC was unbanned in South Africa.

Officials at ANC headquarters also denied knowledge of the youths, who entered the country illegally, apparently from Natal. They have been held in prison at the southern town of Big Bend since their arrival.

On Tuesday an ANC delegation, led by Mr Jackie Selebi, head of the ANC repatriation programme, had talks with the youths, together with Swaziland Interior Ministry and United nations High Commission for Refugees officials.

Confirmed

Later Selebi confirmed that the ANC was no longer sending people for military training abroad.

He said: "On the other hand, some or all of these young persons could be members of our organisation. They mentioned some names of high-ranking ANC officials, people who had directed them to come to Swaziland and then proceed abroad.

"I will not reveal those names. We have to carry out thorough investigations when we get back to South Africa."

The youths are expected to be returned to South Africa soon, according to the ANC delegation.
The king is the figurehead of the country and when there is a dispute, the king is the one to whom the matter is referred. The king's council is made up of the prime minister and other advisors. The king has absolute power and can make decisions that affect the country. The king is also responsible for the appointment of the prime minister and other government officials.

The king is the symbol of the country and is revered by the people. The king is also responsible for the security of the country and is considered to be above the law.

The king's role is to uphold the traditions and customs of the country and to maintain the stability of the government. The king is also responsible for ensuring that the laws of the country are followed and that the rights of the people are protected.

The king is also responsible for the welfare of the people and is expected to take care of the citizens. The king's council is responsible for the administration of the country and for ensuring that the laws are enforced.

The king is also responsible for the foreign affairs of the country and is considered to be a diplomat. The king is also responsible for the defense of the country and is considered to be a military leader.

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Winnie, fired...

Nelson's aide

By Fedz Nhuma

These are exciting times for 47 ANC youths
Swazis exploit
M-Net eyes Swaziland

M-Net representatives from SA are to visit Swaziland next week to discuss a proposed television service for that country. (1)

Talks would be held with the Swaziland Television and Broadcasting Corporation. The Times of Swaziland reported yesterday.
Bus drivers, taximen clash

A SWAZILAND police spokesman on Wednesday confirmed that interstate buses travelling between Swaziland and South Africa were conveying passengers under armed escort because of a dispute between their drivers and those of minibus taxis. Minibus drivers are alleged to have threatened to attack and burn down interstate buses.

The spokesman said Swazi police accompanied the buses from the Masingini central bus rank to the Swazi/SA border at Otoock where South African security forces took over.

SAPA 29/1/1992
Fiefdom facing a modern crisis

THE muzzled voices of Swazi opposition parties are gradually becoming stronger and more collective in calling upon King Mswati III to free the democratic process in the kingdom.

Dr Ambrose Zwane, leader of the oldest unofficial opposition party, the Ngwane National Liberation Congress (NNLC), told AIA his party is demanding the removal of the powerful King’s Order-in-Council decree of April 12, 1973 to free political activity in the country.

The 19-year-old legal decree, declared by the then-King Sobhuza II, repealed the independence constitution, suspended parliament and banned all party politics while giving sweeping powers to the monarch and a few individuals advisors serving as the King’s Council (Liqopo).

Says Zwane: “Underground political parties in Swaziland are like parties in exile. The King needs to come out into the open and invite them to participate fully in the country’s democratic process.”

He also emphasises that last year the King made a speech promising some political freedom for these parties but has so far failed to deliver.

Similar calls have been made at meetings and in the media by leaders of the People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudemo) and the Swaziland Youth Congress (Swayoco).

Pudemo secretary-general, Dominic Mgomezu, says there are reasons why democratic forces inside Swaziland have been dormant.

Mgomezu says those who opposed the repeal of the parliament could not publicly condemn the King because they supported his stand against the Pretoria government. He says supporters of democracy at the time felt the King needed support in his anti-apartheid fight.

Sobhuza’s charismatic leadership and the stability offered by the Swazi economic situation at the time were enough to contain all dissenting voices, said Mgomezu. Problems seem to have come to a head following the King’s death and the autocratic governments that took over before Mswati’s installation in 1987, culminating in the present economic crisis.

Pointing towards a new direction for Swazi politics, both Zwane and Mgomezu are calling for a national referendum instead of the current revisionist meetings held under the Tinkhundla system.

In a bid to curb the economic crisis, encourage investments by Western governments and individuals as well as keep the fragile peace initiatives from breaking, the King has set up a commission to review the flagging Tinkhundla system – a process known as Vusela II.

When this commission was set up, many people voiced doubts that the system had been left unchecked for too long and that undemocratic forces within the government and Liqopo have used it for their own ends.

However, Mgomezu argues that while Vusela II meetings are meant to look critically into the economic and socio-political problems of the kingdom, they fall far short of what a national referendum could achieve.

He says the meetings are limited because the system is trying to review itself from the inside and its terms of reference carry a penalty clause for those in opposition to the views of the commissioners.

He also questions why the King and government are failing to lift the state of emergency to assure Swazi citizens that the political climate has improved.

Pudemo and other progressive forces are calling for pressure groups, organised labour and the church to form a national forum or convention to decide the future of Swaziland.

The NNLC leader revealed he is currently holding meetings with the Vusela II committee. He is also calling for a return to parliamentary democracy and a radical approach to Vusela II.

Without mincing words, Zwane says there is a need for the King to remove himself from direct politics. “The King should be above politics, and at the moment he is not. The problem is that under the Tinkhundla system, all political parties were banned – yet the Imbokodo Movement is still in place.”

The imbokodo Movement is the party that led Swaziland to independence in 1968 and fell foul of voters during the 1972 general elections in which the results became contested between this party and the NNLC.

Zwane says the way forward would be to do away with Tinkhundla and its feudal nature and restructure Vusela II into something like Codesa.

“Imbokodo should resign from power and stop masquerading as a democratic force,” adds Zwane.

The NNLC leader says the Swaziland economy is in dire need of change in order to safeguard its future. He says the economy is feeling the pinch as most aid investment is bypassing Swaziland and finding its way to Eastern European countries.

Zwane says he has heard the rumour about the national Tinkhundla elections being held in November. “If the government is still going to conduct them under the Tinkhundla system, there will be trouble because people do not want this thing.”

Three quarters of the population (600,000) stayed away from the last elections. – AIA
MBABANE - Three young South Africans claiming to be members of the ANC were jailed for 30 days in Mbabane on Wednesday for illegal entry into Swaziland.

Moses Madalane Soho, Lapson Makhubela and Thembiste Nkumane from the Nelspruit area arrived in the kingdom late last month and asked for political asylum and to be sent to a third country to continue their studies. United Nations High Commission for Refugees officials in Mbabane said they could not make those arrangements.

The three pleaded guilty to illegal entry and could not pay a R50 fine. Police sources said they would be sent back to South Africa after their sentences.
Swazi court jails ANC trio

MBABANE — Three young ANC members who crossed into Swaziland illegally last month were sentenced to 30 days' jail by a Mbabane Magistrate’s Court on Wednesday when they failed to pay R500 admission of guilt fines. The two youths and a 24-year-old woman had requested political asylum saying they had left SA because of the ongoing violence. No decision has been taken on their request.
Swaziland buys power

The Swaziland Electricity Board said in Mbabane yesterday that because of the drought, more than 90% of the country's electric power was being imported from Eskom in SA. The board would pay Eskom R36m this year.
Krishnas told not to feed children

MBABANE — Members of a South African Hare Krishna group have been told to stop distributing food to hungry children in Swaziland by the country's Interior Ministry.

A ministry spokesman said no one could distribute food — even in a drought — without registering as an organisation.

The Hare Krishna mission has alarmed some Swazis who are unfamiliar with their shaven heads.

After they distributed food at one primary school in Mbabane, the headmistress forbade them to return.
Focus on Application

New Body to Redefine "PRIVATE" in Education

Redefining the Answer: Gyovu

People in the path of the 'private' "education" sector have to redefine the concept of "PRIVATE". This is a call to action for stakeholders and educators in the education sector to redefine the concept of "PRIVATE" in education. The call to action is to redefine the concept of "PRIVATE" in education and bring it to the forefront of the education sector.

The concept of "PRIVATE" in education has been under scrutiny in recent times. Stakeholders and educators have been called upon to redefine the concept of "PRIVATE" in education and bring it to the forefront of the education sector. The call to action is to redefine the concept of "PRIVATE" in education and bring it to the forefront of the education sector.

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SWAZILAND GOLD

MBABANE - Deposits of gold have been rediscovered in an area of Swaziland where miners flocked before the Witwatersrand gave up a century ago.

The discovery was announced this week by Commissioner of Mines Mr Aaron Vilakazi who said the Rio Tinto company discovered the deposits in the northern Pigg's Peak area. Rio Tinto has a five-year contract to explore that area.

Land claim

SWAZILAND Prime Minister Obed Dlamini said yesterday that once an all-race government was in place in SA this country would open talks for the return of the black homeland of Kangwane.

"We do not want to pressure South Africa with hot matters during the transitional period, but once they are through with their problems we would like them to attend to the issue of returning Kangwane, which is part of our land, to Swaziland," Mr Dlamini said at the end of a week-long visit to Botswana.
police ● Swazis clam Kwa-Ngwane

Return our land, says Swazi leader

Swaziland wants KaNgwane returned to Swaziland:

Swaziland would open talks for the return of the black homeland of KaNgwane once an all-race government was in place in South Africa, Prime Minister Mr Obey Dlamini said at the weekend.

"We do not wish to burden South Africa with such matters during the transitional period but once they are through with their problems we would like them to attend to the issue of returning KaNgwane which is part of our land," Dlamini said.

KaNgwane is one of 10 self-governing states created by Pretoria in the 1960s which gave blacks a political say in their territories while denying them a national voice.
Call for crisis meeting after Mugabe's anti-Semitic jibe

HARARE — Zimbabwe's Jewish Board of Deputies is seeking an urgent meeting with President Robert Mugabe over an anti-Semitic gibe he reportedly made to a crowd in Matabeleland.

The government-controlled Bulawayo Chronicle reported that while he explained his plans to nationalise white land, during a rally in the Bubi district, Mugabe said: "Commercial farmers are hard-hearted people, you would think they were Jews."

Shortly afterwards he told a German television crew: "White people had better face the land problem now, rather than be deprived by force in the future. If white people had hearts, they would understand. But if they do not, hard luck."

Veteran white liberal politician and Central African Jewish Board of Deputies president Muriel Rosin said: "In other countries, remarks like this have started a wave of anti-Semitism." She said her eight-member board had held a crisis meeting in Harare on Sunday to discuss a letter to Mugabe, which was dispatched yesterday.

"We have requested with the utmost urgency an audience with the president as, throughout history, our experience has shown that such statements by those in power have often been the forerunners of extreme anti-Semitic actions," she said. "We would not want it to happen here."

She said Zimbabwe's Askenazi and Sephardi Jewish communities were small: "That is 1,007 souls, counting every Jew — man, woman and child. But they have done a hell of a lot for this country."

She said that when Jewish community leaders met Mugabe after Zimbabwe's 1980 independence, they broached the subject of his formal recognition of the PLO, which has an embassy in Harare. "He made it absolutely clear to us that politically they (ruling Zanu-PF party members) were anti-Israel, but were not anti-Semitic."

Rosin said that in the 60 years since she emigrated to the then Rhodesia from Britain to marry a leading local surgeon, she had never encountered anti-Semitism.

At the weekend, Mugabe consulted Sir Timothy Hill, image adviser to Britain's Tory party, on how to generate investor confidence in the face of "negative publicity" generated by the drought and the Zanu-PF plan to take over 6 million hectares of maize and tobacco belt currently owned by 4,500 whites.

Dry Swaziland, Lesotho reeling

GENEVA — A major international relief organisation said yesterday Swaziland and Lesotho had been especially badly hit by the drought sweeping southern Africa.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said at least 40% of the 600,000 people of Swaziland would soon need emergency food aid as the country underwent its worst natural disaster in living memory.

"The figures of those affected are rising daily as whole communities, proudly self-sufficient just a year ago, succumb to the ravages of a searing drought which has reduced the harvest to 30% of normal," the Socialette. — Sapa-Reuters.
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Mugabe's anti-Semitic jibe

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Dry Swaziland, Lesotho reeling

GENEVA — A major international relief organisation said yesterday Swaziland and Lesotho had been especially badly hit by the drought sweeping southern Africa.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said at least 40% of the 800,000 people of Swaziland would soon need emergency food aid as the country underwent its worst natural disaster in living memory.

"The figures of those affected are rising daily as whole communities, proudly self-sufficient just a year ago, succumb to the ravages of a searing drought which has reduced the harvest to 30% of normal," a statement quoted from the Swiss-based body said.

At the same time, basic rations provided in a government relief operation were already being reduced by 30% as supplies threatened to run out.

In Lesotho the drought was hitting hard in mountain districts. In one hospital, one tap was being used for one hour a day for all hospital needs.

The IFRC weekly bulletin quoted Lesotho Red Cross official Roland Motoko as saying the age-old community help system could be breaking down "with neighbours and relatives apparently unable to help those even more unfortunate than themselves". — Sapa-Reuters.
MBABANE: Swaziland is continuing its claim to areas of land in South Africa's Lowveld, Prime Minister Obert Damini said at the weekend.

The claim is based on the belief that borders were wrongly drawn up during the colonial era. Many Swazis argue that the South African homeland of KwaNdwandwe, to the north of the kingdom, and Ingwavuma in Natal, on its southern border, are rightly part of Swaziland.

-Soweto, July 1992
-Africa News Service
Swazi mine to close

MBABANE - Swaziland's only coal mine, which earns the country around R7 million annually, is to close down at the end of the month.

Emaswati Coalmine has told about 250 workers that they will lose their jobs, but mine officials were unable to comment further yesterday.

The mine is situated in Mpaka in the centre of the country. - Swesetane

Africa News Service and Sape
Reuters-AP-AFP
Swaziland loses aid

MBABANE - SWAZILAND is losing out on international drought aid because donor nations believe the country is relatively well equipped to deal with the emergency.

Explaining the dwindling drought aid, Swaziland's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Prince Mbsisi Dlamini, said yesterday that some donors and aid agencies were saying Swaziland should use funds earmarked for other development projects to cope with the drought crisis.

Source: 24/11/92
Swaziland outlaws polygamy

Mbabane — Polygamist marriages in Swaziland, allowed under Swazi traditional law, are now forbidden under a new marriage law. This was revealed on Thursday during legal argument in the Swaziland High Court. The issue arose when the second wife of a fraud accused wanted to have her South African insurance policy transferred to Swaziland as surety for her husband's bail. — Soil.
Royal wives start charity

FOR THE first time in Swazi history, young royal wives can now talk to the press, radio and television as ordinary women or mothers.

The break in tradition came after the wives formed Lusito, a private welfare organisation, to assist the poor with hospital fees for their children.

Lusito means "help" in the Siswati language.

The move by Inkosikati Sibonelo LaMngometulu and other Emakhosikati (royal wives) to form this charity is turning the tables on old traditions in the Swazi royal household.

King Mswati III has to face the challenge of seeing his wives and three other members of the royal family being quoted in the press or giving radio and television interviews in their individual capacity.

LaMngometulu says Lusito plans to send poor children abroad for specialist medical treatment, if necessary. She is the president of the new organisation. Other members are Inkosikati CaMabuzza, Inkosikati LaNgorwane, Thabisile Dlamini and Veleleni Dlamini, a member of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Inkosikati LaMabuzza explains that as members of the younger generation of Swazis, they have realized that the country does not have good hospitals for children with serious illnesses and adults with terminal diseases.

"We have become aware of the serious condition of the needs of children and the terminally ill and the fact that our hospitals have not developed enough to cope with today's needs in hospital care," she says.

"While government is trying to remedy that situation we have also found it would be best not to wait, but act to save lives," adds LaMabuzza.

The King's wives have had a limited involvement with children in the past, visiting and comforting them in hospitals.

Says LaMabuzza: "At times children and adults alike are referred to hospitals across our borders and the family needs to travel with them but cannot afford that extra cash for food and accommodation.

"We hope to be able to help with such arrangements. In times of disaster like floods and fires we also find that extra help is needed."

Money for Lusito will be raised from the public, donors, businesspeople and governments. - AIA
ARMS CACHE FOUND
MBABANE: Swaziland police have discovered an arms cache including 10 AK-47 rifles hidden in dense bush at the north-eastern Lomahasana border post with Mozambique. 29/7/92
The area has become notorious for the smuggling of arms of war from Mozambique and Lomahasana police have reported an increase in crime; Drivers of trucks carrying goods to Maputo, just an hour away from the Swazi border are victims.
Buses withdrawn

MBABANE The owner of a Swaziland transport company which has been operating bus services to South Africa has pulled out because of violent opposition by local kombi drivers.

Mr Robbie Zeeman said yesterday that there had been weeks of harassment of his buses by kombi drivers and shots had been fired. After the first shooting we were called to a meeting with the kombi drivers at the Road Transportation Board but the feud has not been solved," he said. One of his drivers was injured in the shootings.
Swazi maize shortfall

MRABANE - Swaziland has 350,000 people in need of emergency food supplies, but so far food aid is reaching only 7,000, according to drought disaster task force chairman Mr Ben Nettbandze.

He said latest estimates indicated that 7,000 tons of emergency food supplies were needed in drought-hit areas.

Swaziland's Agriculture Ministry said recently that the country's annual maize requirement was just over 160,000 tons and the predicted local crop for this year was 69,000 tons, leaving a shortfall of 91,000 tons.
Drought could close big pulp, sugar plants

MBABANE — The South African-owned Usuthu pulp mill in Swaziland and a major sugar company are contemplating closing "down because of a water shortage caused by the current drought. Sugar and pulp are Swaziland's major export earners and the country's major employers.

Natural Resources Minister Senzenjini Tshabalala told the Senate that the Usuthu Pulp Company, which is owned by Sappi, and Mhlume Sugar Company had both warned his ministry that they may have to stop operating until water supplies improved.

This week another major pulp company in Swaziland announced that it was retrenching 200 workers because of the prevailing depressed market conditions.

Tshabalala added that a delegation from the sugar company had told him that authorities in South Africa were now reluctant to release water supplies from the eastern Transvaal through the Komati River dam project, a joint exercise between the South African and Swazi governments.

The R500 million Komati project involves the construction of dams in Swaziland as well as at Drielkoppen, in Transvaal.
A SWAZILAND pulp company, Swaziland's largest, was on the verge of running out of water supplies, a senior manager warned. He said the country's largest pulp company, which is operated by Sappi, was in trouble.
Swazi royal women lend hand

FOR the first time in Swazi history, young royal wives can talk to the press, radio and television as ordinary women and mothers.

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The move by Inkosikati Sibone-lo LaMngometulu and other Enakhosikati (royal wives) to form this charity is overturning old traditions in the Swazi royal household.

King Mswati III has to face the challenge of seeing his wives and three other members of the royal family quoted in the press or giving radio and television interviews in their individual capacities.

Unlike royal families in Europe, Swazi royal wives have never appeared in public, except for ceremonial purposes.

Lusito is the first organisation of its kind to be formed by royal family members. Lusito plans to send children abroad for medical treatment, if necessary.

LaMngometulu is president of the new organisation. Other members are Inkosikati CaMabuza, Inkosikati LaNgozwane, Thabulis Dlamini and Veleleni Dlamini, a member of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

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— AIA
Swaziland begs for water

Swaziland early this month threatened to suspend operations because of water shortages caused by the current drought. Sugar and pulp operations are Swaziland's major export earners, and the country's major employers. According to recent government statistics, sugar exports accounted for R305 million of the country's total export revenue of almost R400 million, and wood pulp contributed R21 million. The two agro-industries together employ more than 20,000 people.

The closure warning was given by Natural Resources Minister Senzenjani Tshabalala in the country's senate.
brief

Following a rowdy meeting on Monday, members resolved to file an application at the High Court for the revocation of the ban. It was imposed by royal decree in 1973 by former monarch King Sobhuza on the grounds that multiparty politics were causing division in the country.

Unbanning sought

MBABANE — Swaziland's human rights organization is to put pressure on the government to revoke the 19-year-old ban on political parties.
Food aid less than hoped

MBABANE - Swaziland will not get as much food aid as hoped during the current drought, a major donor agency spokesman said yesterday.

Mr Mark Bowdon, African director of the Save the Children Fund, said conditions in Swaziland were bad but not as serious as in other African countries. Swazi officials monitoring the drought claim that 350,000 of the country's population of 800,000 are in need of emergency food relief. - Sapa-Reuters-AFP
30 days for illegal entry

A young South African was jailed for 30 days in the Manzini Magistrate's court on Friday for illegally entering Swaziland.

Alfred Khoza told the court he had entered Swaziland in transit and had intended to ask for political asylum while he made arrangements to travel to Tanzania where he claimed he was to undergo military training for the African National Congress.

Earlier this year, a group of ANC officials from Johannesburg visited Swaziland and interviewed several young South Africans who were arrested on charges of illegally entering the country.

The groups numbering several hundred also claimed they had been recruited by the ANC and were on their way to Tanzania or Zambia for military training. - Sopo
Protests after 2 acquitted

MBABANE - A storm of protest is sweeping Swaziland following the acquittal on Tuesday of two men accused of shooting dead a visiting Botswana student.

Protests were received by local newspapers from Botswana as news of the acquittal circulated, and there have been demands for a retrial.

The prosecution in the murder trial said two students from Lechosa who were vital eyewitnesses to the shooting had refused to travel to Swaziland to give evidence.

Timothy Tema, a South African, and Ralph Thring, a Swazi, both of Manzini, were charged with the murder of Mr Setamiso Kgobo, a Botswana student visiting the University of Swaziland for an athletics meeting in February.

The prosecution alleged the shooting followed clashes with Batswana and Sotho students.
Sultan to visit Swazis

MBABANE - The Sultan of Brunei is to pay a State visit to Swaziland soon at the invitation of King Mswati III.

The sultan is regularly voted the richest man in the world.

The invitation followed a visit earlier this year to Brunei by a large Swazi government and business delegation led by Mswati.

The delegation also visited a number of countries in Europe, America and the Far East to promote Swaziland among foreign investors as a potential trading partner and ideal choice for investments.

Swaziland Commerce and Industry Minister Senator Barnabus Mhlongo this week defended the delegation’s tour, saying it was essential in attracting badly needed foreign investment and overseas markets.

Swaziland had benefited economically during the past 10 years from the conflicts in neighbouring Mozambique and South Africa. - Sapa.
MBABANE - The Swaziland Government admitted in parliament that current investigations show there is corruption in some government departments.

A government spokesman would not specify the departments or the extent of the corruption but said investigations were under way.
MBABANE—A serious outbreak of measles sweeping parts of Swaziland is believed to be due to nutritional problems. A spokesman for the Swaziland Health Unit said yesterday the inadequate and unbalanced diet of rural people, as a result of the drought, had weakened their bodies' resistance to disease.
SA taxi drivers battle Swazis

THEO RAWANA

A tense cross-border feud that has lasted for three months continued at the weekend as taxi drivers fought for control of the Manzini-Manzini space.

Minibus operators from Manzini arrived in Bulawayo on March 20. They claim that they have been involved in the transportation of Swazi workers and Swazi-owned vehicles have been seen in Bulawayo. The police are said to have been deployed to the area to maintain law and order.

SA taxi drivers are reportedly concerned about what they see as the increasing presence of Swazi taxi drivers in Bulawayo. They claim that the Swazi taxi drivers are offering lower fares and are thus gaining an unfair advantage in the marketplace.

The Manzini-Manzini taxi drivers are reportedly planning to protest against the presence of Swazi taxi drivers in Bulawayo. They are hoping to get support from taxi drivers in other parts of Zimbabwe.

We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as they become available.

Leon attacks govt over gambling Bill

Readers are encouraged to provide feedback on the proposed gambling Bill, which seeks to legalise hard gambling and introduce a multi-billion-dollar gambling industry to Zimbabwe.

The Bill has been widely criticised by civil society groups and investors, who fear it will lead to negative consequences for the country.

In response to the criticism, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni has defended the Bill, stating that it will bring much-needed revenue into the country.

We will continue to provide updates on the Bill as they become available.

Traders and informal traders face illicit gem deals

DIAMOND dealer Maurice Katz was arrested on charges of dealing in illegal diamonds worth R500 000.

Katz, 44, and co-accused Louis Awtid and Sanford Wright, both of Bedfordview, were arrested on Thursday after a police operation at their home in Johannesburg.

The police found 180 carats worth R500 000 in diamonds stashed in the house, along with documents and equipment related to the diamond trade.

The police also seized a diamond ring worth R50 000 from the home of another man, who is also accused of dealing in illegal diamonds.

The arrests come after a string of similar operations targeting diamond dealers in South Africa.

We will continue to provide updates on the diamond trade and related operations as they become available.

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Digital Pictures
MBABANE - Swazi police are holding four South Africans, two of them women, for entering the country in possession of arms of war.

A police spokesman said yesterday four AK-47 rifles were found in their car as they crossed into Swaziland from Mozambique. They are Lucas Mahlangu, Jeremiah Khoza, Betty Makhubela and Angelina Muena, all from Germiston. They were travelling in a car with registration KNC 374T, according to police.

Sowetan Africa News Service
Plans for Swazi dam

A FEASIBILITY study of the R300m-R330m Maguga Dam on the Komati River in Swaziland was well advanced. SA Water Affairs spokesman Paul Roberts said yesterday. (S2) (S8)

In terms of a treaty finalised by SA on November 6, Swaziland had two years to decide. Roberts said, the dam would benefit agriculture, in both countries.
Swazi women urged to take leading role

MBABANE — The traditionally male-dominated society of Swaziland should have a woman prime minister in the not too distant future, according to Swazi Prime Minister Obed Dlamini's wife, Mirriss.

In an interview published in yesterday's Swazi Observer, she said that with the many social, political and economic changes taking place, African women could no longer afford to remain in the background.

Swazi women must let their majority voice be heard. Cast aside their inhibitions and take part in social, economic and political debate and in the political development of their country, she said. — Sapa.
Top journalist dies in Mbabane

Mbabane — Veteran Swaziland journalist Norman Sowerby, the BBC correspondent in the mountain kingdom, died on Wednesday after a long illness.

British-born Sowerby arrived in Swaziland in 1973 as managing editor of The Times of Swaziland, a tabloid newspaper.

He transformed the newspaper into the country's most popular daily and worked on a freelance basis for The Star Africa Service.

He retired five years ago from The Times to concentrate on working for the BBC, Reuters and several magazines.

Sowerby, who leaves his wife and two children, will be buried in Mbabane today. — Sup.
SWAZILAND - GENERAL

1993
Meet the 'Light American':

With taste!

Sweet 16 and already

Attention: "Smiling in front of camera"

Secretary buys up as he

Alcohol

De Klerk brother to be dad again at 64

Swazi tycoon's R20m SA spree
the Figtree. He also bought the Hotel Mediene, 60km from Nelspruit on the road to Komatiport.

The former owner of the Greek-style Paragon, Mr Billy Ross, said he received a phone call "out of the blue" from one of Mr Dlamini's employees offering to buy the hotel.

In August Mr Dlamini bought the Wayside Inn, a rustic two-star hotel back to 1987.

Three months later Mr Dlamini bought the Citrus Valley Lodge, paying with cash and with the aid of a bank loan.

"There are plenty of rumours going round about where he gets his money, but we are all in the dark," said Mr Wolmarans.

Trouble

"He keeps telling us he started sugar farming when he was very young and that he works very hard, but it is impossible to expand at such a rate. The sugar industry is just not that lucrative. And why this sudden spurt when the tourist industry here is in such trouble? I find it hard to believe this is a straightforward spending spree."

Seven days after securing the Citrus Valley Lodge, Mr Dlamini bought the Bambi in Machadodorp from the Protea group.

Last month he expanded his burgeoning empire to include Barberton, buying the one-star Impala Hotel on December 10 and the Phoenix Hotel on December 12.

In Swaziland he is best known for his attempt to murder two farm labourers known as the Matsengwa brothers, whom he accused of bewitching his two-year-old daughter.

Convicted

He dragged them to her graveside, tied them to stakes and roasted them. They were close to death when they were rescued.

He was convicted in the Swazi High Court in 1988 of attempted murder and was fined. Last year the brothers sued for R180,000 damages. They were awarded R80,000 by the court, but Mr Dlamini has lodged an appeal against the judgment.

He first hit Swazi headlines, however, by becoming involved in a row over the purchase of a sugar farm in Big Bend.

He kicked up a fuss after he had been beaten to the sale by a South African farmer, Mr Hans Helmut Steffen, demanding that Swazis have priority over foreign investors.

His protests led to the
Swaziland to develop new investment code

MBARANE — Swaziland is developing a new investment code to help attract investors, Commerce and Industry Minister Barnabas Mhlongo said last week.

The idea was to bring into one format regulations ranging from labour laws to tax incentives, he said in an interview.

"It is the creation of a one-stop investment office to simplify the process," Mhlongo said.

Experts from the UN Industrial Development Organisation have submitted an initial report on industrial and investment policy, which the Swazi ministry is studying before drafting the code.

Mhlongo said the ministry had created new schemes to encourage growth in the small business sector in a country heavily dependent on agriculture. He said the citrus, forestry and sugar industries had been hit hard by the 1992 drought, which was extending into this year.

'These industries are labour intensive and have had to retrench," he said.

Finance ministry officials said GDP was projected to fall 2% in 1992 from 2.5% growth in 1991 and 9.8% growth in 1990.

They said the key agricultural sector's contribution to GDP had tumbled to 16% from 20% last year as a result of the drought.

Some Swazis feared SA's re-emergence on the world scene after the apartheid years could have an adverse economic effect on Swaziland, which had benefited from companies seeking to invest in the region without political problems.

However, Mhlongo said he believed that in the medium to long term "the demise of apartheid is going to have a very positive effect in Swaziland".

"We believe that if there is political stability in SA, trade in the region will not be disrupted, bearing in mind that SA is our biggest trading partner," he said.

Swaziland gets about 80% of its imports from SA, including goods moving through the republic, and exports 70% of its products to SA with 40%-50% of the exports remaining there.

Mhlongo was enthusiastic about regional co-operation, saying it was "urgent" that SA joined regional groupings like the 10-nation Southern African Development Community as soon as a democratic government was in place. — Reuters.

Cash available to fund expansion

MBABANE — Swaziland's Central Bank governor James Ncumulo says the country has adequate cash to fund economic expansion he hopes will take off late this year or early in 1994.

"There is much more liquidity than the banking sector can absorb through lending to the private sector. We have more than 100-million emalangeni ready for lending to the private sector, which is more than adequate for quite a while," he said in an interview this week.

"I think we'll go through a rough time in 1993, but in the longer term I'm optimistic. I hope there will be an (economic) upturn, possibly towards the end of this year or early next year."

He said there was some concern over the projected 1992/93 budget deficit of about 100-million emalangeni after four years of surplus. However, gross reserves were "quite healthy" at around $1-billion emalangeni at the end of December — equivalent to about six months' imports.

Acting Finance Minister Solomon Diamini said the government was budgeting for a deficit for the 1993/94 fiscal year starting April 1 due in part to recession and drought.

But he expected to keep the deficit within bounds through strict controls on government spending. The deficit was being financed out of government reserves.

Ncumulo said the broad-based money supply (M3) had grown 19.7% in the year ended last December compared with 12.4% in 1991.

Ncumulo said the Swazi currency was closely tied to the SA rand within the common monetary area. — Reuters.
MBABANE — A youth who accused the government of corruption during election education sessions being held in preparation for next month's elections was yesterday 'arrested' by the Royal Swazi Police.

Martin Nthiamase is being held at the Bhunya police station and no charges have been laid against him. He was arrested as Prime Minister Obed Dlamini was calling for political tolerance at a meeting in Simunye. Prince Mahlalelgangeni, chairman of the Electoral Education Commission, said after the arrest that he was 'tired of being harassed by the youth'. — Sowetan Africa News Service.
Swazi govt 'swindled'

CMBARANE — Swaziland's government has been swindled out of millions of rand by foreign construction firms, the government in control of structural work, through misrepresentation at the customs and excise office, it was said yesterday.

Customs inspector Lucas Magagula said yesterday foreign companies brought equipment into the country, thus cheating the government of millions of rand.

Magagula said local firms could not cheat because an invoice was needed in the event they purchased equipment from South Africa, while foreign companies were not required to.

Equipment for construction bought in South Africa must be registered at the customs department. — Sapa.
Swazis can't take plunge

MBABANE (Reuters) - The Swaziland government is still seeking legal advice on whether to release a controversial "Black Wednesday" report on an inquiry commissioned after university students clashed with security forces on November 14 1990.

Prime Minister Obed Dlamini said this week his government was having difficulty in deciding whether to release the report as no legal advice had been obtained. **Reuter**
Swazi squatters left homeless

Government ignores pleas from shack dwellers to let them stay on and orders bulldozing of their homes.

Sowetan Africa News Service
Sowetan 26/12/93

MBABANE—More than 300 squatters in Nkhamini, Nhlangezulu, were left homeless after their shacks were bulldozed in a pre-dawn raid.

Mr Sipho Dlamini, chairman of the Nkhambini-Nhlangezulu Squatters Association, said the residents were summoned by Regional Secretary of Shiselweni District Mr Duma Hlatshwayo last week and told to vacate the government farm on which they were illegally settled.

They were given until last Wednesday and even an appeal to the Prime Minister, Mr Obed Dlamini, failed to persuade the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Mr Thomas Stevens, to stall the evictions.

On Monday the office of the Prime Minister referred the squatters to the governor of Ludzidzini, where they were told the evictions would not take place until the King had been briefed.

The residents were shocked when their homes were surrounded by armed police at 4:00am on Wednesday morning.

They were ordered out of their homes which were bulldozed.
Bulldozers leave 300 homeless

MBABANE — More than 300 squatters in Nkhamini location, Nhlangano, were left homeless after their shacks were razed by Swaziland government bulldozers in a pre-dawn raid on Wednesday.

"Sipho Dhamini, chair-
male of the Nkhamini-
Nhlangano Squatters’ As-
sociation, said the resi-
dents were summoned by the regional secretary of Shiselweni District, Duma Hlatshwayo, last week and told to vacate the government farm on which they were illegally settled.

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The residents were shocked when their homes were surrounded by armed police at 4am on Wednesday.

Most of the squatters have been left out in the open, while a few have been accommodated by sympathetic people in the township.

Residents of the township have threatened to protest against the evictions by boycotting elections expected to take place soon.
Swazis want land back

SWAZILAND expected SA to return all former Swazi territory before a transition to black majority rule in SA. Prince Mahlan%
Mabangane said when he addressed a meeting last week on the possible reincorporation into Swaziland of KwaNgwane and Ing-
wamaba, regions annexed almost a century ago.
Swazi cops confirm death

SWAZILAND police on Monday unofficially confirmed a Times of Swaziland report that a Swazi national, Sipho Sibandze, died at an African National Congress camp in Cuba while undergoing military training on 19 March.

The newspaper report quoted a Swaziland police source as saying Sibandze joined Cosatu while working as a migrant miner at a South African mine before joining the ANC.
AIDS on the rise

MBABANE—Nearly 0.5 percent of Swaziland's population has been infected by the AIDS virus, the Health Ministry said this week.

A report to parliament describing the situation as "extremely serious," said 25,000 of the kingdom's 700,000 people were HIV-positive. At the end of 1997, 248 Swazis had full-blown AIDS. The number of people with the HIV virus may double by 1997, it added. — SAPA

Reuter
ICANN's proposals are being challenged by civil liberties advocates and opponents of the domain names system. The plan to change the domain name system could upset stability. 

**PLANS CHALLENGED**

Swazi opposition says the plan to change the domain name system could upset stability.
King in Swaziland

Tradition is still the single most powerful force in Swaziland's politics. A recent court case, the 'Ato Bhejo case', has highlighted the importance of tradition in Swaziland. The court case has sparked a debate on the role of tradition in modern society and its impact on the legal system. The case has also raised questions about the relationship between tradition and human rights. The court's decision has been hailed as a victory for traditional values, but it has also been criticized for reinforcing patriarchal structures. The case has sparked a debate on the role of tradition in modern society and its impact on the legal system.
Swazi govt 'corrupt'

A top official in the Swaziland Ministry of Finance told a commission of inquiry on Friday that the kingdom's government was riddled with corruption which could not be ended, as some of the most senior and powerful officials were implicated.

The ministry's principal secretary, Mr Isaac Shabangana, said some companies had been paid by officials for goods that were not delivered, while some goods not requisitioned were often delivered to government departments. — Sapa.
Swazi police hold activists

MBABANE — Police arrested eight political activists at the weekend for allegedly holding an illegal meeting, called by an underground organisation called the Convention for a Full Democratic Swaziland (Cofudeswa).

Among those arrested were Swaziland Youth Congress leaders Mphandlane, Shongwe, Jabulani Dlamini, and Michael Shekwa, Swaziland National Front secretary-general Glenrose Dlamini, and Cofudeswa's Sabelo Dlamini and Gorman. — Tsele. — Star Africa Service.
Getting the taste of ‘coke’

MBABANE — Swaziland police have reported an alarming increase in cocaine trafficking from Mozambique through the kingdom for distribution in South Africa.

A police spokesman said that while in the past the route had been for transit, the drug was finding its way to local markets.

He said that the drug was usually smuggled through the Lomahasha border post and Matsapa International Airport.

— Star-Africa Service.
Tie-up with SA judiciary

MBABANE — Justice Minister Dr. Zonke Khumalo signed an agreement yesterday which provides for the secondment of judges, magistrates and prosecutiors from SA to Swaziland's judiciary. — Sap(2:2)
news in brief

They don't wear the pants

THE Swaziland Government has banned the wearing of trousers by Swazi women. Royal counsellor Mr. Lucaso Fandzhe, senior Swaziland chief and governor of King Mswati's royal residence, announced the ban at the weekend and said the growing number of women wearing trousers in public was "shameful" and showed disrespect for the king. He said Swazis living in areas near royal residences should exercise self-discipline and avoid "bad practices" which people in other communities could emulate.
Appeal for drought aid

THE Swaziland government ap-
pealed yesterday for international
aid for more than 250,000 drought
victims.

National Disaster Task Force
chairman Ben Nhlozane said his
organisation would need at least
24 600 tons of maize and 2 200 tons
of beans to bring the situation
under control.
The Swaziland Sugar Association is considering returning to Maputo for exports, but has not taken a final decision, as indicated in a Business Day report on June 17. The association said that even if it did resume exports through Maputo, this did not mean it would no longer use Durban harbor.
Swaziland to set up R7m training centre

MBABANE — A R7-million communications centre to train journalists and communications personnel of Southern African countries would be set up in Swaziland, the country's Broadcasting and Information Minister Mr Nkosi Ntswane said on Friday.

He told a news conference here that the centre, at the University of Swaziland, would provide training for journalists and managers in communication strategies. — Sapa
Warning to Swazis

Swaziland's trade representative in SA yesterday warned Swazi citizens not to visit declared unrest areas in SA unless such visits were essential.

In the warning published in Mbabane, Mr Sam Malinga said many Swazis had died in the violence. If Swazis had to visit unrest areas in the PWV area or townships in the Cape and Natal, they should avoid social gatherings like parties and bars and keep a low profile.

Sowetan Correspondents, Sapa.
Swazi legal process plunged into chaos

By Nkosangphile Ziyane
Star Africa Service

MBABANE — Swaziland's judicial process has come to a full stop following a High Court ruling barring the acting director of public prosecutions, Andrika Kosepere Donkoh, from entering any court in the country.

The ruling which threw the courts into crisis was made by Chief Justice David Hull on Friday. On Monday, prosecutors said they could not discharge their duties as the director of public prosecutions was the only person empowered to sanction prosecutions.

The action by the Chief Justice follows allegations that Donkoh had destroyed a court record of an application for a summary trial of a murder suspect, Johannes Dibuhle. The judge refused to allow Donkoh to be heard at the hearing through legal representative Denis Kuny, SC.
MBABANE — A six-person Nigerian delegation arrived in Swaziland on Monday to deliver a special message to King Mswati.

Nigerian Industry and Technology Minister Mr Alhaji Amine said he could not disclose the contents of the message from President Ibrahim Babangida. — Swaziland Correspondent, 28/12.
MBABANE — Upheavals similar to those in South African schools are being experienced in Swaziland, but for different reasons.

As in parts of South Africa, some schools have virtually been taken over by pupils. In some instances the pupils, supported by their parents, have ejected teachers and headmasters.

Whereas the unrest in South African schools arises from dissatisfaction with educational standards and continued control by the white government, in Swaziland it has been blamed on efforts by political parties to replace the all-powerful monarchy with a democratic system.

At a meeting of headmasters and school committee members in Manzini, some headmasters said they were afraid to go to their schools in case they were attacked by pupils.

The situation was blamed on underground political parties who, defying the official ban on party political activity, have been campaigning for a multiparty democracy in Swaziland.

— Sowetan Africa News Service.
Swaziland Prime Minister Obod Dlamini has been asked by the Law Society of Swaziland to intervene and help find solutions for the problems facing the administration of justice in the country.

The society's appeal follows the continuing dereliction of the justice machinery caused by confrontations between legal professionals in the country. The worst of these was the recent dispute between the Director of Public Prosecutions, Adinkrah Donkoh, and Chief Justice David Hull early this month when Donkoh was banned from entering any court in the country following the disappearance of a document in a murder docket.

Source: Reuters-APF
MBABANE — Amnesty International has called on the Swaziland government to repeal all express laws before parliamentary elections are held.

In a letter to Prime Minister Obed Dumani, the human rights organisation said it was concerned about the imprisonment of political activists. Amnesty called on the government to repeal a 1973 proclamation forbidding political activity, and expressed concern at "stringent" bail conditions imposed on activists of the People's United Democratic Movement and the Swaziland Youth Congress arrested in connection with a rally early this year.
Curbs for Swazi election

Mbabane — No one can be buried, tombstones must stay veiled and sport will be forbidden on election days in Swaziland. The country's 860,000 people will vote in three stages in parliamentary elections on August 21, September 18 and October 11. The police and army will vote early so they can provide security on the final election day.
NEWS  New civilian government is all

Minister gets R2-m demand

Sowetan Africa News Service

MBABANE — Swaziland's Minister of Justice, Mr Zonke Khumalo, is being sued for more than R2 million by Mr Peter Forbes, the white Swazi national who was jailed without trial and then deported.

A letter of demand sent to Khumalo on Tuesday by Forbes' lawyers requests payment within seven days of R2 020 000 for damages allegedly suffered by Forbes as a result of the minister "unlawfully and maliciously" ordering his detention, the withdrawal of his citizenship and his deportation in 1978.

Forbes previously said he was detained without trial after he began exposing high-level corruption in Swaziland at the request of the late King Sobhuza. He went on a hunger strike in an attempt to force the authorities to give reasons for his detention and ended up in a Johannesburg hospital.

When he recovered he was barred from returning to Swaziland, where his ancestors had lived for three generations.

He has since won the right to return to Swaziland.
Swaziland's king lays claim to Kanga Ngwane

Mbabane — Swazi King Mswati III urged the incorporation of South Africa's Kanga Ngwane region into Swaziland in a speech at the country's Silver Jubilee celebrations outside Mbabane yesterday.

South African President De Klerk was among the 200 foreign guests, including African heads of state, attending the festivities for Swaziland's 25th Independence Anniversary and the king's 25th birthday.

Swazis regard Kanga Ngwane as part of their 'land' which was excised with the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1900. — Sapa.
'One voter, one bullet'

A PAMPHLET calling for "one voter, one bullet" a few months before Swaziland's elections has been circulated in the capital of Mbabane.

The People's United Democratic Movement (Pudemo), which is campaigning for a boycott of the elections later this year, immediately denied responsibility for the pamphlet.

Pudemo secretary-general Mr Domenic Mhlongoza said the pamphlet appeared to be an altered version of one issued by the organization urging voters to boycott the election.

Pudemo had never advocated violence against anyone participating in the coming elections, but urged people to use their discretion, he stressed.

Pudemo is an illegal political party in Swaziland.
Swazis to vote after 20 years

MBABANE. The first stage of Swaziland's first general elections for 20 years by secret ballot takes place on Saturday, September 16, when the primary elections are held.

But, the candidates still must be screened by police before being allowed to stand and the final list has not been completed.

Candidates were nominated by each community in the chiefdoms and urban centres throughout Swaziland.

The secondary elections take place in October on a date still to be determined.

Illegal political movements like the People's United Democratic Movement and the Swaziland United Front are boycotting elections until a multiparty system is reintroduced. — Sapa.
A 19-YEAR-OLD Swazi girl, Bindzile Nhlangengetwa, has been nominated for elections to the Swazi parliament.

The shy, devoted Christian has no idea why she was nominated and is believed to be the youngest nominee in any Swazi election.

The girl, who intends becoming a judge, said she had attended a nomination court in her village and had been completely surprised when her name was called out and the elders asked her to stand up.

"I thought they were talking about another Nhlangengetwa," she said.

Although she may not campaign before Saturday's preliminaries, Bindzile - who initially had no idea what she would do if elected - said she thought she had the support of her constituency.

Bindzile has no idea what she will do in parliament if elected in Swaziland's Democratic elections.

She said all youth in Swaziland had to must participate in the country's development and should vote for someone they trusted and someone who would not sleep in parliament like some other former members of parliament, who were known to have done.

Bindzile may not start campaigning for the elections until after September 18.
Swazis eyeing the big prize

A desperately poor but very beautiful corner of South Africa is being fought with the same dogged affection as shown to a Swazi virgin at the annual reed dance.

Kangwane, tucked away in the eastern Transvaal, is the prize which Swaziland so desperately wants. King Mswati III has said: "We won't rest until we get Kangwane ..."

Mswati, successor to Sobhuza II, who was the world's oldest reigning monarch when he died in 1982, has put the Kangwane Question at the top of his foreign affairs priorities.

He has powerful backing from his government, and, in the past, from the Organisation for African Unity as well as Mozambique.

History will show that Swaziland could well have already had Kangwane and Ingwavuma under its jurisdiction — literally, doubling its size and population — had not the South African Government backed down on a decision taken in the early '80s to hand the two areas to the Swazis.

It was only after massive opposition by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu, and Kangwane leaders that the Government did its about-turn. However, the Swazi Council of Chiefs of South Africa has continued to petition Pretoria to give away Kangwane.

South Africa first played its hand in 1981 by dissolving the Kangwane Legislative Assembly. A year later, former Cabinet Minister and ambassador Dr Piet Koornhof ran the gauntlet of the KwaZulu assembly when he told understandably angry Zulus that Ingwavuma was also being excised in Swaziland's favour.

Enos Mabuza, then chief minister of Kangwane, fought his country's issue in the Supreme

Swaziland has again demanded the incorporation of Kangwane, homeland for millions of Swazis.

Norman Chandler of The Star's Pretoria Bureau looks at the background

Court and won an out-of-court settlement — in essence, a climbdown by the South African Government.

The Government was however still not satisfied and immediately established the Rupert Commission to investigate Swazi claims.

The Ingwavuma question will no doubt rear its head during the years ahead and provide the more-than-likely ANC government of the new South Africa with a major headache, taking note of the Zulu reaction to possibly losing land which they regard as theirs and most certainly not Swaziland's.

The claim over Kangwane, where about 700,000 Swazis live compared to 500,000 in Swaziland, is based on a 1920's belief long held by Mbashe that the colonial powers (that is, the British) who ruled southern Africa wrongly drew the borders separating South Africa and Swaziland.

It has been said at various times that Carolina, Barberton, Malalane, Oshock, Bophuthatswana and other districts in the eastern Transvaal are rightly part of Swaziland.

Swaziland is waiting in the wings for an ANC-dominated government in South Africa and it is no secret that as soon as that happens, it will play its ace by demanding incorporation.
Swazis go to the polls tomorrow

SOWETO 24/9/93

**SECRET VOTE** Elections will break the traditional chiefs' stranglehold on political power.

BABANE — Swazis vote tomorrow in the first round of general elections hailed by the government and Western diplomats in the region as a breakthrough for democracy.

For the first time, ordinary Swazis have been allowed to select their own candidates for the 55-seat lower house of parliament, breaking the stranglehold of traditional chiefs on political power.

The 283,693 registered voters in the tiny mountain kingdom of about 900,000 people sandwiched between South Africa and Mozambique will choose from a record 2,094 candidates.

"The nominees going to the primary election come from all walks of life. None can be deemed planted by the government of Swaziland," one diplomat said.

"Voters have a free and secret chance to cast their ballot for whoever they want to," he said.

The country's small opposition movement has branded the coming elections a farce, citing a 20-year-old ban on political parties and a continuing state of emergency.

"The elections are not democratic and there is no doubt about that. How can the government say the elections will be free and fair when the country's repressive laws have not been repealed," Mr. Dominic Magomezulu, spokesman for the People's United Democratic Front (PUDemo), said yesterday. — Super
Swazis rush to vote C18\1993

VOTERS chanting "Democracy has finally reached Swaziland" crammed polling stations after a hesitant start to the kingdom's first free elections for 20 years yesterday. C18\1993.

In Mbabane the main polling stations were deluged by midday after a slim turnout of only a few hundred people in the morning.

Electoral officials said rural stations, where voting was even slower in the morning, were also busy by afternoon. C312.

A state of emergency has been in force in the tiny kingdom for 20 years and political parties remain banned. Still, ordinary Swazis were jubilant over the chance to select their own candidates for the 55-seat lower house for the first time.

Reports by Sapa, Eca, Reuters
VOTERS chanting "Democracy has finally reached Swaziland" crammed polling stations yesterday after a hesitant start to the kingdom's first free elections for 30 years.

In the capital Mbabane polling stations were deluged by midday after a turnout of only a few hundred in the morning.

A state of emergency has been in force in Swaziland for 20 years and political parties are still banned.
14 killed on East Rand

Tokoza toll soars

FOURTEEN people died and two were wounded in violent incidents mainly in Tokoza on the East Rand during the weekend, police reported.

Spokesman Lieutenant Deon Peens said in a statement yesterday most of the victims had been shot, stabbed, hacked or burnt to death on Saturday night or early yesterday morning.

Most of the bodies were found at hostels in the township.

A man with three bullet wounds to the head was found at Tokoza Hostel No 3 and admitted to Natal spruit Hospital in a critical condition.

In Katlehong, the bodies of four men were found. Two had been shot in the head and two burnt to death.

The body of a man with stab wounds was found in Duduza and that of another with assegai wounds at the Selby hostel near Johannesburg. — Sapa.

Swazi polls a great feat

THE first election by secret ballot in more than 20 years in Swaziland has been hailed an outstanding success by chief electoral officer Mr Robert Tswalu.

Candidates elected in the primary election will be allowed to start campaigning immediately for the secondary elections to be held on October 11.

Campaigning was previously not allowed under Swaziland's non-party election regulations.

Political parties and a Westminster-style constitution were scrapped in 1973 by the late King Sobhuza. — Sapa.
Swazi PM survives first round of historic votes

Mbabane. — Swazi Prime Minister Mr Obed Dlamini and four of his cabinet have made it through first-round voting in the country's parliamentary elections.

The first round, which was extended to Sunday because of a slow turnout on Saturday, narrows the field to three candidates for each of the 55 contested seats.

It is the first time the citizens of this Southern African kingdom of about 900,000 people have been allowed to choose their own candidates for parliament, instead of simply endorsing those put forward by traditional chiefs. — Sapa-Reuters
King scraps 60-day arrest

KING Mswati III of Swaziland has scrapped the 60-day detention without trial law, introduced in 1973 by his father and predecessor, King Sobhuza II. 21/9/93

The law was introduced when the late King Sobhuza abolished the multiparty constitution, outlawed all political parties and ruled the country as a non-party state. Mswati repealed the law with immediate effect.

He also dissolved the Council of Ministers, with effect from tomorrow, to allow Cabinet members to campaign for run-offs for parliamentary elections. -- Sapa.
'SA hit squad in Swaziland'

MBABANE. — A hit squad from South Africa aiming to assassinate Swaziland's former prime minister Mr Obed Dlamini is currently in the country, the Swaziland Observer claimed yesterday.

According to the newspaper, the plot aims to prevent Mr Dlamini's possible re-election to parliament and possible re-appointment by King Mswatii III as prime minister.

The hit squad, said to be from South Africa, was believed to have been hired by people wanting the prime ministership, it said.

Mr Dlamini’s position as prime minister was dissolved last Thursday along with those of other cabinet ministers on the orders of King Mswati.

This was done to enable Mr Dlamini to campaign in Swaziland's elections on an equal footing with other candidates.

The newspaper said it was “reliably understood from impeccable security sources” that as a result of the threat, Mr Dlamini was living in a secure place with his family.

Police had declined to comment on the alleged plot, saying only that Mr Dlamini was safe. — Sapa
Mixed Feelings Over Swazi Elections
10 Ministers ousted in Swaziland poll

Mbabane — Only three members of the 13-member Cabinet won election to a new parliament in results announced yesterday after Swaziland's first secret balloting in more than 20 years. Prime Minister Obed Dlamini was one of the Ministers ousted.

Other former cabinet members lost in primary rounds or were prohibited from running because they belonged to the royal family.

About 200 candidates competed for the 55 seats, running in districts based on the traditional chiefdoms.

Turnout was low because of confusion over the three-stage election that began with nominations earlier this year, then a primary and then the final vote held on Monday.

The powers of the new 55-member parliament are unclear as King Mswati III has yet to unveil a new constitution expected to entrench the monarchy while establishing a Bill of Rights and an elected legislature. — Sapa-AP.
Challenge for public servants

MBABANE — Those who advocated a return to party politics were a threat to the political and economic stability of Swaziland, Deputy Prime Minister Dr Sishayi Nxumalo said at the weekend.

Addressing constituency officials from Manzini, Nxumalo said the peaceful development of the country was at stake. He called on those who criticised the system while holding political office or jobs in public service to resign "and find work elsewhere" to make way for those who believed in the system. Members of Parliament in the Hhohho region had earlier described the present "inkunzi/a" system of government as "useless", charging that it had not done anything for the development of the country's economy or improving the political situation in the country.

The MPs said a new system in which the interests of Swazis were better represented needed to be introduced.

Party politics were banned by King Sobhuza II, and recently elections were held on a non-party basis. Opposition groups have described the process as a sham and a travesty of democracy. — Sowetan Africa News Service.
SWAZILAND - GENERAL

1994 - 1995
Plea to Swazi king

MBABANE — Swazi chiefs and Ka-
Ngwane headmen have appealed to
Swaziland's King Mswati to incorpo-
rate the homeland into Swaziland be-
fore SA's April election.

At a weekend meeting, the king
urged them to be patient as negotia-
tions on adjustments to the border
were "already under way." The
chiefs said they had been asked
by President P W de Klerk and ANC
leader Nelson Mandela to vote for
them, but they and their subjects
owed allegiance to the Swazi king.

They said KwaNgwane did not be-
long to Mandela or De Klerk but to
the king. It had been taken from the
Swazis by the English and the Boers.

Sapa. 8/12/94
Swazi Aids figures shock

Mbabane — A new study on Aids in Swaziland expects more than 100,000 Aids orphans in the kingdom by the year 2006.

Within 12 years 41,000 fewer children will start primary school than if there had been no Aids in Swaziland, which has a population of about 800,000, the report says.

Education Minister Prince Khuzulwandle Dlamini said "much of the investment in education will be lost" unless Aids was checked.

"Official" figures show one in five sexually active Swazis to be HIV positive. In some areas the figure is one in three.

Health Minister Dr Derek von Wiesel said a hospital would have to be built every six months to cope with Aids.

— Sapa.
Winds of change begin to blow in Swaziland

MBABANE — Swaziland, the only Southern African country which bans political parties, is not threatened by recent arson attacks but must respond to demands for change, political analysts say.

Arsonists set fire to parliament buildings and a firebomb was thrown at the home of Information Minister Prince Phinda earlier last week.

There have also been attacks on the homes of other officials and government property in recent weeks.

A previously unknown group, calling itself the Mshikeshi People's Army, has claimed responsibility for some of the attacks.

At the same time opposition political groupings are being formed despite a government ban.

No longer pleased

"The fact that opposition parties are being formed is an indication that a certain section of the Swazi society is no longer pleased with the present system of government," political science lecturer Mr Petros Gambukusa Magagula said.

He dismissed as an exaggeration claims by one opposition group that the kingdom was on the verge of civil war, but said people clearly wanted change.

"The people want a change, and if the government continues to ignore the calls for multiparty democracy, the opposition might resort to violence which will bring instability and scare potential investors," Magagula, who lectures at the University of Swaziland, said.

Political parties were outlawed in 1973 when the late King Sobhuza II declared a state of emergency and suspended the constitution to suppress opposition to his rule.

The government has tolerated opposition groups since 1993, when the country held its first free parliamentary elections in over two decades, although along non-party lines.

Prime Minister Prince Mbilini has warned the country's 900,000 people that political parties remained banned, and it was a crime to form one.

Police have also strengthened security around government buildings and ministerial homes after the recent attacks.

The Swaziland Youth Congress Party also threatened violence if free political activity was not allowed, but the threat was condemned by other opposition groups.

No arrests in the arson attacks have been made so far, but Mr John Masson, president of the Swaziland Chamber of Commerce, said the business community was confident the police had the situation under control.

He said the climate had not changed for business in the last few years when most of the opposition groups were formed.

"The formation of the political parties in Swaziland has not changed anything in as far as the business community is concerned. The political situation is still good for investment," he said.

A Western diplomat said he believed a majority in the generally conservative kingdom were happy with the monarchy.

"Perhaps that's why many people voted in the 1993 parliamentary elections to show their support for the king," the diplomat said.

"I would assume many people would have boycotted the elections if they were fed-up with the one-party rule or the king."

— Sapa-Reuters.
Ignorance dogs
Swazi health care

WATER is life. Where it is scarce, rivers stop flowing, vegetation wilts and people suffer. Eventually death reigns.
The 10,000 people of Hlane know these things first hand.

Swaziland's rural areas have experienced severe drought for the last few years and Lubombo, along the Mozambique border, has been hit the hardest. Hlane is part of the Lubombo region.

With the water shortages, people in Hlane are drinking contaminated water. Every month there are a thousand cases of cholera, diarrhoea, typhoid or dysentery. As often as twice a month the diseases break out.

According to a United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) report, children and women, Swaziland has one of the biggest health care budgets on the continent, second only to Gabon, but the nation's health ranks among the poorest in the region.

The country's health expenditure is largely financed by external aid and private business. The private sector bias is toward higher-cost curative interventions which turn a profit. Preventative medicines, such as hygiene education, good water and sanitation, have not received their share of the health budget.

In 1996, the country spent an estimated R250 per person on health care. With expenditures that high, the global goal of “Health for all by the Year 2000” ought to be within reach.

But the road to health looks rocky for the rural population, which still does not have access to clean drinking water.

Health education officer Abigail Dlambini says the community has very little understanding of health and hygienic issues. People defecate in the bush. The feces end up in the river — the source of water for drinking, bathing and washing.

The community still has to change some old habits. The ventilated improved pit latrine is an acceptable system for rural areas and the government is providing people with bags of cement to construct toilets. But some use their cement rations to plaster their homes, because they do not understand the importance of good sanitation.

The Rural Water Supply Board and various government ministries have been working to overcome these problems. Since it began in 1977, the board has served 42 percent of the rural population by implementing 270 micro and macro water supply schemes throughout the country.

The board has been supported by the Canadian International Development Agency; the British Overseas Development Ministry, the European Development Fund, the United Nations Development Programme; the Netherlands, the Swazi government and non-government organisations.

While the Rural Water Supply Board is willing to help, board officer Simon Simelane says Hlane must first establish a committee and a savings fund. The community fund must have at least £3,000 (R17,000) before they qualify for assistance.

The Rural Water Supply Board is strict about water quality and prefers spring water and boreholes, as that water does not require treatment.

Now that government is linking clean water and hygiene to the global goal of “Health for all by the Year 2000”, the rural population may see improved health.
Wind of change blowing through Africa’s Ruritania

The only country in southern Africa not to have democratic government, Swaziland, is moving towards reform.

CHRISTINA LAMB reports

Mbabane — Were it not for the lines of trucks clogging the narrow mountain roads, entering Swaziland would be like going back in time. Placards proclaim “Long live the king!” every other person appears to have the same surname, the phone book has a large section under “His Majesty” and the big issue is whether the government will charge for cattle-dipping.

Beneath this pastoral idyll, however, all is not well in the mountain kingdom, the only southern African country not to have introduced democracy.

Facing an unprecedented wave of popular protest, including the fire-bombing of parliament, the 27-year-old king is pondering reform. His relatives, who do well out of the present arrangements, are shocked.

Charismatic

“Swaziland sticks out like a sore thumb,” said a diplomat, “and the king is well aware of that.” On the map, the landlocked country of 900,000 people resembles a small land-blot, surrounded by South Africa and Mozambique, which both held democratic elections last year.

Mswati is regarded as charismatic and forward-looking. He is an athletic man who makes a public appearance most Fridays wearing a leopard skin and printed cloth, and red feathers in his hair. He has taken a modest five wives.

“We are not standing still,” the king said last week when asked about reform. The country continues to be run by a dual system. The king has official and secret royal councils and there is a non-party government and parliament. In 1993 there were elections for 55 of the 95 seats, but the cabinet continues to be chosen by the king, who also selects a prime minister from the royal clan.

Until recently there was little pressure for change. Swazi society is predominantly rural and to most Swazis the king is not to be questioned.

The relatively high per capita annual income of about R3,800 has also kept the pressure off. In the 1980s the economy grew at 5%-6% a year as Swaziland became a base for multinational companies that found it politically acceptable to invest in South Africa.

All that has changed. Two years ago the budget surplus became a deficit. Seshaya Nsmbi, the deputy prime minister, said economic conditions alone dictated the decision to reform the public sector. “People are becoming disgruntled because the government does not deliver,” he said. “To do that we must make the public sector less cumbersome and faster to respond.”

“The idea is not to change the system: at the moment people do not want political parties because they are frightened this will end our traditional peace and bring in conflict like we have seen in our neighbours.”

The opposition is unimpressed. Glenrose Dlamini, secretary-general of the Swazi National Front, one of several illegal parties, said: “What they are doing is a waste of money. It’s not the people who are ineffective, it’s the whole system.”

The opposition strategy is to make the country ungovernable through civil unrest.

Dominic Mngomezulu, secretary-general of the People’s United Democratic Movement, admits, however, that the opposition has failed to tap into the rural semi-literate majority.

Rumblings

With Swaziland increasingly out of step, few believe the royal house will be able to resist the rumblings of its subjects for long. The question is whether change is managed towards a constitutional monarchy or forced, in which case the royal family could be ousted.

Militant activists warn that if change takes too long they will resort to tactics such as persuading South African dockworkers to refuse to handle Swazi goods, which would soon bring the country to its knees.

Percy Simelane, a government spokesman, insists: “We can’t change just because our neighbours have done so. When the rest of southern Africa was fighting civil wars no one asked why we did not follow, so why should we now?” — The London Sunday Times
Drought brings misery in Swaziland

By Bhekizile Masebula

THE EFFECTS of the drought in southeast Swaziland have reached serious proportions. At least three people reportedly died in Lavumisa this year as a result of malnutrition.

Mr Ben Nhlanzane, chairman of the National Disaster Task Force which is responsible for relief aid to drought-stricken families, says the drought, particularly in the Lowveld, is very serious and many people are expected to suffer.

90 000 worst hit

More than 90 000 people have been identified as worst-hit by the drought, and he said the situation was worsened by the lack of food supplies to the affected families.

The Swazi government early this year made an appeal to international donors to come to its rescue to save the starving families.

It especially targets the Lavumisa area in south-east of Swaziland, where the drought has left people without food for five consecutive years.

So serious is the situation that the drought has left farmers bankrupt because of accumulating debts acquired through bank loans.

Demanding repayment

Swaziland prime minister Prince Mbilini Dlamini and parliament have been approached by the farmers who requested them to order the Swaziland Development and Savings Bank, the sole financial institution giving loans to cotton farmers, to temporarily stop demanding repayment of loans until the drought crisis was over.

The farmers told Sowetan it had appeared that the government was reluctant to address their plight. Bank officials continued 'to intimidate them, demanding their money back.'

Lavumisa inhabitants now live off watermelons which, because of the lack of rain, are not very big.

For water, local inhabitants used okra, a wild vegetable which sheds a lot of water when cooked. But okra, too, is very hard to find.

Ailing residents

Several non-governmental organisations such as the Baphalali Swaziuland Red Cross Society, the Swaziuland Farmers Foundation and the Lutheran World Services have tried to come to the aid of the residents.

But the NGOs are facing with dwindling food supplies and their relief work cannot last longer as a result.

Nhlanzane says even if food supplies were available, it was difficult to locate some of the needy families, especially those living in remote rural areas in the Lowveld.

Some of the places were inaccessible and had no roads at all.

Drought victim

One of the drought victims, 70-year-old Mr Giha Nhleko, nearly died from hunger at his home at Qomintaba in Lavumisa last month.

Nhleko, whose legs were amputated, was in a very critical condition when Sowetan visited his home early last month. He could hardly speak and his voice was very hoarse.

"I don't know what and I living for on this earth. My son died the same way ... he died of starvation. Who will look after my grandchildren?" said Nhleko.

This month the United States government donated more than R11 million for the stricken families in Swaziland.

Well-known farmer and member of parliament in the area, Mr Robert Mkhwanazi, says the community should not be suffering from water shortages as South African authorities have given Swazis the go-ahead to use...
Swazis brace for threat of big strike

MBABANE. — Swazi employers said they would treat today as a normal working day in spite of warnings of chaos from trade unions which have called a general strike.

A spokesman for the Swaziland Federation of Employers, Musa Hlopho, said the government had pledged there would be maximum security and employers should not fear businesses would be vandalised.

"We advise members to treat today as a normal working day," said Mr Hlopho, adding that workers who went on strike risked losing their jobs.

The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU), the biggest union umbrella body, postponed a general strike from last Tuesday to today to give the government time to meet 27 demands.

It warned government and employers of chaos if offices and businesses remained open and told pupils to remain away from school for their own safety.

The federation, among other demands, wants legislation to allow courts to reinstate workers unfairly dismissed and Swazi citizenship for SFTU secretary-general Jani Sithole.

Mr Sithole was born in Swaziland to a Swazi mother, but the government says he is a Mozambican and last month threatened to deport him for causing trouble in the kingdom.

Prime Minister Prince Mhlapisi said this week the planned strike was illegal and offices and businesses should operate as normal.

The Education Ministry has told pupils to attend school, and the teachers' federation said on Friday schools would remain open. — Reuter.
Car industry deal worries Swazis

John Dludlu

Swaziland Commerce Minister Majo- ghintha Dlamini said the agreement on the southern African region's auto industry could deprive his country of an opportunity to develop its fledgling car industry.

He said in terms of the deal reached with counterparts at the five-nation Southern African Customs Union — which includes SA, Lesotho, Namibia and Botswana — all members had to submit motor industry development plans by the end of this year.

The long-term plan stipulated foreign firms, wishing to set up manufacturing plants within any country in the customs union area, would have to apply to the ministers' council, one of the new structures to be set up.

Dlamini's concern was that major carmakers would continue to pour their mon-
ey into well-developed SA and Botswana before the long-term plan came into effect, due to better locations and incentive packages offered by those countries.

This might thus create uncertainty about applications of several foreign auto companies considering setting up shop in Swaziland. These firms might change their minds and start operations in SA.

"Once located in one country, it's difficult to relocate," Dlamini said.

He called on other partners to "be more considerate" to less developed fellow regional members.

Trade and Industry Minister Trevor Manuel's spokesman Ismail Lagardien said, in an apparent bid to allay fears, that SA remained committed to negotiating the agreement with minimum disruptions and SA was determined to assist other partners to develop an industrial base.
Swazi king shrugs off Mandela

On a state visit to South Africa, Swaziland’s King Mswati III paid little heed to those pushing for democratic reforms.

Swaziland’s King Mswati, the only ruler in Southern Africa resisting multi-party politics, has told President Nelson Mandela his people have developed their own type of democratic consultation and had elected a representative Parliament.

The young king, whose country’s last elections in 1993 allowed neither political parties nor campaigning by candidates, politely told Mandela that those elections “reflected the wishes of the whole nation.”

Mswati, on a state visit to South Africa last week, gave no hint to Mandela that he intended to lift the ban on political parties imposed in 1973 by a royal decree of his father, King Sobhuza. After talks with Mandela, Mswati told the president at a state banquet that much about his country was inevitably “unfamiliar and misunderstood.”

He proceeded to give Mandela a rundown of the political changes initiated in 1992 by a “unique democratic system of consultation” based on leadership through the consensus of the people. He was referring to the committees which he appointed, mainly headed by princes of his Dlamini clan and filled with traditionalists, which toured the kingdom soliciting the views of Swazi on political change.

The exercise — “a type of rolling referendum,” as Mswati put it — had led to national elections at the end of 1993 that the International community had declared free and fair. Opposition groups, however, condemned both the “Vusela” consultations, as they were known, and the elections as a farce.

Journalists covering Mswati’s visit believe Mandela privately gave the king a dressing down about his refusal to allow free political activity. But Mandela made no direct mention of this in his own speech. He did, however, say that South Africans and Swazis shared the same aspirations and beliefs in freedom, justice and respect for human dignity. Mandela added a warning that development in southern Africa would succeed “only if we ensure popular participation in the political and economic life of our countries.”

Mswati said Swaziland was changing politically and economically and “evolving according to the wishes of its people.”

The king and his entourage ducked the South African media, giving no chance for the provocative questioning they knew could be expected.

Back home in Swaziland the media gave extensive coverage to Mswati’s visit but offered no critical comment. National television filled tracts of its news programme with footage of the trip, presenting it as a memorable national achievement.

A television crew, accustomed to recording Mswati’s every public move, filmed away furiously. The station, where newscasts are seen in Swazi from a newsreader friend of Mswati’s, followed the monarch wherever he went.

The Swazi Observer newspaper, owned by a trust fund dominated by the Dlamini royal family, crowed about Mswati’s “charisma” that had taken South Africa by surprise. “He came, he saw, he conquered,” an article by a senior staffer said of Mswati’s visit.

Swaziland parliamentarians, many of them poorly educated traditionalists with no political experience, called on Wednesday on the Senate and House of Assembly to thank Mswati for his visit and for clearing the air about the country’s political system.

A former prime minister serving in the Senate, Prince Bhekinkhulu Dlamini, even challenged the press to push harder for a referendum to test if Swazis really want multi-party politics.

Mswati’s visit came at a time of unprecedented criticism of Swaziland’s lack of free political activity, its worsening labour relations, a human rights record tarnished by the increasing official harassment of journalists and legislation denying bail to suspects in a wide range of offences, including many political charges.

The Swazi authorities, and Mswati himself, remain resentful of criticism, especially when it comes from non-Swazis. A recent report in a Johannesburg newspaper likening Mswati to a ‘taproot dictator created a furor in Swaziland. The Cabinet promptly appointed a committee to examine the report and to pursue the matter further with South Africa.

Trade union leader Jan Sithole found his citizenship being called into question when the government felt unions were becoming too strident in calling for another national strike in July. That strike was hastily called off when Mswati warned of the possibility of violence. Sithole remains a Swazi for now, and has received the support of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions to prevent the government from deporting him.

Swaziland’s opposition remains small and fragmented, but has been encouraged by political changes in South Africa and the rest of the sub-region. Though still officially banned, political parties have emerged from underground and openly agitate for multi-party democracy. Many are affiliated to the Convention for Full Democracy in Swaziland, an assembly of opposition parties in which the People’s United Democratic Movement is by far the most powerful.

Critics say Mswati and his advisors are afraid to open the system to political parties, as it will mark the beginning of the end for the monarch’s absolute rule. Many, however, concede that a party enjoying Mswati’s tacit support would sweep the polls, at least in the first multi-party elections.
600 Swazi Aids cases 'tip of iceberg'

MBABANE: About 600 cases of Aids had been officially reported in Swaziland since the disease was first diagnosed in the kingdom in 1987, but the actual figure was much higher, health officials warned yesterday.

They warned that the figures published in the Aids programme's latest quarterly report, released yester-

day, should not be regarded as the actual figures, but rather the tip of the iceberg.

Health workers fear that large numbers of people carrying HIV, which causes Aids, do not report to clinics and are therefore not recorded. It is widely believed they are spreading the disease rapidly.

The report said the large number of condoms issued by the Aids programme, 78,000 in just two weeks recently, was no guarantee the condoms were being used for their intended purpose.

Many condoms found their way into the hands of children and were being used as balloons. Many adults had found unconventional uses for them. — Sapa
IMF advice to Swaziland a 'red alert' — minister

Programme aims to rescue ailing economy

MBABANE. — The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will impose modified forms of their structural adjustment programmes on Swaziland in 1996 in a bid to save the kingdom from an impending economic crisis, Finance Minister Derek von Wissell says.

Mr von Wissell told reporters on his return from annual IMF and World Bank meetings in Jamaica that the financial institutions had undertaken to provide urgent technical assistance to design appropriate programmes for Swaziland.

"The IMF and World Bank will impose a pre-emptive and modified form of the structural adjustment programme... This will call for a stringent and tight budget control on the part of the government," he said.

"This means that the institutions will provide only the structural adjustment guidelines and we will execute and manage the programme on our own to avoid being totally overwhelmed and smothered to operate under their conditions." Mr von Wissell said that World Bank and IMF advice that Swaziland immediately impose structural adjustment to avoid an economic crisis should be seen as a "red alert".

He said there was a need for action, not panic. — Sapa.
Commonwealth unhappy with
Time table for handover to civilians

Resist Pressures
Nigerian Rulers

Berekama Billa
Loopholes in Swazi laws leave journalists open to prosecution

By Cudjoe Amembaka

312

Loopholes in Swazi laws leave journalists open to prosecution
government and therefore he can be criticised for this or for that.” Mrs Aphane said. “The royal family should just be a family that we all look up to.”

Government officials say changes are under way. The most recent parliament included far more candidates elected by secret ballot than ever before, although the king is still able to appoint a sizeable number of members. And he retains total veto power.

Swaziland, which gained independence from Britain in 1968, has had a few political earthquakes in the past.

In 1973 the present king’s father, Sobhuza II, scrapped the constitution that the British had left behind and crushed workers’ protests with rubber bullets and teargas.

Political parties were also made illegal, although several small organisations exist now without much trouble from the authorities.

Government officials like to point out that political killings are not part of the Swazi history. In fact, many of the current ministers were jailed at one time or another. This is so with the current deputy prime minister, Sishayi Nxumalo, who was jailed in 1985 for accusing other government officials of corruption.

Mr Nxumalo now laments about the experience. He says many changes are under way, including the writing of a constitution.

But he says it is unclear how long it will take. He adds that the conversion from traditional to Western ways cannot be hurried and that investors should have faith in his country. “The whole world right now is saying there is South Africa, let’s go there,” he said.

“But I hope that soon people will start seeing again that we are part of the market in southern Africa.”

Of all sub-Saharan, our system has worked, whether you understand it or not. It has worked.”
R24-m aid for Swazis

The Argus Correspondent

PRETORIA.—Japan is to provide R24 million in grant aid to Swaziland for the building of a rural water supply project.

It is the second major grant made to a southern African country in the past week. Japan and Lesotho earlier signed an agreement for R25.1 million to alleviate the mountain kingdom's grain crisis caused by years of drought.
SWAZILAND — GENERAL

1996 — 1997
The Foreign media asked to be in Switzerland next week to be pressed to get

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Be here for Carey
Swaziland's King in a tight royal coup

The last time the nation's ruler was overthrown, the government was in the midst of a constitutional crisis, with an opposition party calling for a referendum on whether King Mswati III should retain his absolute power. The crisis was sparked by a mass protest against the king's decision to ban political parties and a government crackdown on dissent. The king's critics say he has been increasingly authoritarian and has used the armed forces and security forces to silence opposition. The government has denied the allegations and said it was acting in the best interests of the country.

Just in Antrim

The King of Swaziland, also known as Ngwenyama, is in a tight royal coup. The last time the nation's ruler was overthrown, the government was in the midst of a constitutional crisis, with an opposition party calling for a referendum on whether King Mswati III should retain his absolute power. The crisis was sparked by a mass protest against the king's decision to ban political parties and a government crackdown on dissent. The king's critics say he has been increasingly authoritarian and has used the armed forces and security forces to silence opposition. The government has denied the allegations and said it was acting in the best interests of the country.

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Swazis struggle to marry tradition with demands of modern life

By RICHARD CORNWELL
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

For the past 50 years, Swaziland has been struggling to find a way of marrying the demands of the "modern" bureaucratic state with the power and privileges accruing to those owning their position to a "traditional" system centered around the ruling Dlamini royal lineage.

On September 6 1968 Swaziland became independent, with a parliamentary/multiparty system dominated by the Dlamini's own political creation, the Imbokodvo National Movement (INM), which had taken all the seats in the pre-independence elections of 1962 and 1967.

During the next few years King Sobhuza II outmanoeuvred the relatively small group of modernists who sought to reduce his role to that of a constitutional monarch or figurehead, and although the terms of the largely British-designed constitution forced him to rule through parliament, no laws were passed without his approval.

In the elections of 1972, however, it appeared that the INM's parliamentary monopoly had been breached when three opposition members were returned by the electorate. The INM and the king himself sought to overturn this election result through the courts.

They proved unsuccessful, but in April 1973 Sobhuza suspended the constitution and appointed a royal commission to make recommendations on a constitutional system more amenable to Swaziland's traditional elite.

The commission's findings were never published, and in 1977 the king announced that Swaziland would be ruled through "traditional institutions". Future MPs would be elected by an indirect system centered on regional committees (thokhulu).

In essence this was designed to prevent the modernists and reformers gaining even the smallest foothold in the political arena. Despite the apparent reindustrialization of constitutional institutions, Swaziland was now an absolute monarchy, in which unauthorized public meetings were prohibited and preventive detention was used to deter opponents.

Despite the myths perpetuated often in good faith, by the "traditionalist" camp, the Swazi kingdom is neither very old in historical terms, nor has its institutions been cast in stone.

Indeed, one of the underlying reasons for Sobhuza's success as a leader was his ability to modify and transform Swazi tradition when occasion demanded, and even to reinvent it. It was due in no small part to Sobhuza's own personal charisma, and stature that certain institutions and practices advocated by him came to be accepted by the majority of his subjects as essentially Swazi and therefore immutable.

Before the question of succession could be finalized, Sobhuza died suddenly in August 1982 after 60 years on the throne. As so often in Swazi history, the death of the king ushered in a time of troubles, and a power struggle for the ruling Dlamini household apart.

On April 25 1988 Prince Mabuto finally ascended the throne as Mswati III, an absolute monarch aged just 18 and faced with the formidable challenge of trying to restore the unity of the Dlamini while at the same time seeking policies to combat the substantial economic and social problems confronting the kingdom.

By 1988 it was clear to most that the political and governmental system was in need of radical change. Sobhuza's experiment had failed to meet the demands made on it. Efforts to reform this system and the resistance to change by so-called traditionalists have continued to provide the dominant theme in Swaziland's history ever since.

By the end of the 1980s coherent opposition to the status quo was emerging from the ranks of organised labour and the students at the national university. They were willing to defy legislation that branded virtually all activism as subversive.

By the beginning of 1991, events in South Africa, and the increasing interest being shown in Swazi affairs among foreign aid donors, nudged the king and his followers towards the path of reform.

In September 1991 a consultative commission, known as Vusela (Greeting), was established to canvass Swazi opinion on constitutional matters. The commission was dominated by conservatives, and proved a disaster.

Its successor, Vusela II, was a little more progressive, and recommended a fairly substantial reform of the system, although it stopped short of calling for the reintroduction of party politics.

The political struggle now moved to focus on this issue, with the reformists drawing encouragement from the democratic revolution in SA. Strikes, political violence and arson have raised the stakes in the political arena, and the conservatives and traditionalists find themselves under increasing pressure to dismantle the system that assures them of a place in society.

Understanding the complexity of Swaziland's political turmoil is made more difficult by pervasive rumor and intrigue. Moreover, there is a substantial part of Swazi society, including most of the leadership, who rely upon their beliefs in the supernatural.

The rituals and symbols of kingship, for example, are more than mere rituals, and tough to explain away.
Young king faces the sands of time

BY ADRIAN HADLAND
Mbabane

The latest salvo of crippling strike action and the recent political turmoil in Swaziland marks the beginning of the end for the subcontinent’s last remaining absolute monarchy.

While many countries around the world have shown that societies, and even fully fledged democracies, can make provision for a symbolic and constitutional monarchy, few have presented a sustainable vision of executive, absolute kingship in the context of the 20th century and beyond.

Provision for a monarchy in South Africa’s own constitution, even though no absolute powers will be ceded, remains one of the most contentious issues faced by the constitution’s makers.

The major reasons for the fading of absolutism are the same compelling reasons behind the emergence of democracy as the increasingly dominant mode of governance of our contemporary era.

Without the transparency and accountability inherent in a democratic system of government, corruption, nepotism and secrecy are likely to flourish, to the detriment of all but a limited elite.

“Power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely”. Apart from his title and all the obvious trappings of royal entitlement, the 28-year-old King Mswati III has inherited a difficult, arguably unsustainable, situation.

In 1973, his predecessor, King Sobhuza II, in the face of new clamourings for democracy, issued a royal proclamation which has come back to haunt Mswati.

“I have assumed supreme power in the kingdom,” the proclamation states, and “all legislative, executive and judicial power is vested in me”. This directive has remained in force for more than 20 years, with the mantle of supreme power now being worn by Mswati.

Added to this, and also still in force, are a number of clauses within the proclamation aimed at preventing political activities.

The absence of political parties and the over-concentration of authority has meant the struggle for power in Swaziland has been confined to the royal family.

Historian Richard Levin says that following the death of Sobhuza, a four-year battle for familial supremacy was waged, culminating shortly after the accession of Mswati in 1986 with the arrest on sedition and treason charges of 12 prominent public figures, including a former prime minister, a former labour minister and members of the royal family.

The factionalism and intrigue of that period continue today, contend many Swazis, further complicated by networks of formal and informal royal advisers.

These advisers, say critics, form a “human curtain” around Mswati, keeping him isolated and uninformed. But it is the course of history that threatens the absolute monarchy in Swaziland.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the domino theory became a popular means of describing the likely impact of communism on a region, meaning one country after another tumbling in the ideology’s thrall.

This theory was also used to justify military intervention in some countries.

Ironically, it is democracy that is following the domino principle in the 1990s, and Swaziland is the last domino resisting the multiparty system in southern Africa.

The monarch and his self-appointed cabinet face an increasingly confident and militant pro-democracy movement, as well as pressure to reform not only from neighbouring countries, but from donor nations and in forums like the Southern African Development Community.

The sands of time are surely running low for absolutism in this part of the world. – Independent Foreign Service.
for a democracy
intact on their right
Swazis are still

FOR MY FRIENDS IN ZIMBABWE
King Messiah of Swaziland, one of the world's last absolute monarchs, has issued a decree prohibiting the use of refrigerators in his country. The decree, which comes into effect immediately, aims to promote traditional values and prevent what the king views as a modernization of Swaziland.

The king, who has ruled the country since 1986, said in a statement that the use of refrigerators is a sign of western influence and is not consistent with the values and customs of Swaziland.

"Refrigerators are symbols of Western culture and are not compatible with our traditional way of life," the king said. "We Swazi people have lived without refrigerators for centuries and we will continue to do so from now on."

The decree affects all households and businesses in Swaziland, and violators will be subject to fines and other penalties.

The move has been met with mixed reactions. Some Swazi people are supportive of the king's decision, praising him for preserving their cultural heritage. Others, however, are concerned about the impact on daily life.

"It's difficult to imagine life without refrigerators," said one Swazi woman. "But I understand the king's concerns and will try to adapt.

The decree is not expected to have a significant impact on the economy, as the use of refrigerators is relatively uncommon in Swaziland.

Still, it remains to be seen how the decree will be implemented and how it will affect Swazi society in the long term.
**KING UNDER SIEGE**

By BHEKIE MATSEBULA

SWAZILAND faces yet another mass stay-away on February 19.

It has been called by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) in the face of the Swazi government's continued refusal to address workers' demands for political change.

The demands include a revision of the Industrial Relations Act and the unbanning of political parties in Swaziland.

Sources within Swaziland told City Press this week that the situation showed no improvement, as the government continued to harass the SFTU leaders.

This week the SFTU's assistant secretary general, Jabulani Nxumalo, was arrested for allegedly forging his matriculation certificate.

On Wednesday he was fined on R500 bail.

During the bail application Nxumalo told the court that the charge was a fabrication and that he believed it emanated from his involvement in the SFTU.

The situation in Swaziland has also drawn the attention of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

Cosatu met with the SFTU executive in Johannesburg on Thursday to discuss the political situation in Swaziland. Details of the meeting were not immediately available.

**King castigated**

Meanwhile, Swaziland's major underground political party, the People's United Democratic Movement (Pudemo) on Monday castigated King Mswati III for refusing to bring about political change.

Pudemo said Swaziland was the only southern African country where political parties were banned — and it was high time the situation was changed.

Political parties in Swaziland were banned by the late King Sobhuza II (King Mswati's father) on April 12, 1973 — when he abolished the British formulated constitution, replacing it with the controversial Tinkundla system of government in 1978.

Pudemo and other underground political parties said they supported the SFTU's call for a mass stay-away on February 19.

The SFTU's secretary general, Jan Sithole, said that on the day before the proposed stay-away workers would hold a meeting to decide whether the action should proceed, should government fail to meet their demands by then.

The Federation of Swaziland Employers and the Swaziland Chamber of Commerce and Industry this week held urgent talks with SFTU and government representatives to try to avert the stay-away.
Swaziland reform hopes revived after meeting

Pietermaritzburg — Hopes for negotiations on Swaziland’s constitution have been given a boost after a meeting between Swaziland’s royal-led government and its pro-democracy federation of trade unions.

Political protests late last month brought commercial activities in the country to a standstill.

The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions and other groups are pressing for democratic reform in the tiny kingdom.

“The talks show there is some form of willingness on the part of the government to talk about these issues,” trade union leader Thomas Dlamini said yesterday, referring to negotiations on a return to multiparty democracy. He described the meeting on Tuesday as “talks about talks”.

Dlamini, the national co-ordinator of the SFTU, said a mass meeting would be held today to “reconsider the contemplated strike on February 19”.

“I am sure the executive will try to sell the idea to give the government more time on the issue.”

Labour Minister Albert Shabangu would not comment on the meeting.

After the four-day stayaway last month, strikers returned to work only after King Mswati III ordered his subjects back to work amid a heavy security force presence. — Own Correspondent.
Swazi king ‘has not moved’

BY BEKIE MATSEBULA

BANNED POLITICAL parties in Swaziland yesterday rejected King Mswati III’s promise that his government will reinstate constitutional rule 23 years after it had been suspended by the late King Sobhuza II.

Secretary-General of the popular People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudemo), Dominic Mngomezulu, said King Mswati’s promises were “just like his usual promises that he will bring political change” in Swaziland.

On Friday King Mswati III during the official opening of this year’s parliamentary sitting said “the time has come that we carry on with the constitution” adding that a committee will be set up to prepare the way for the reintroduction of a constitution.

“He (Mswati) hasn’t started saying anything. To us (Pudemo) he is just silent,” Mngomezulu said by phone from Manzini yesterday.

“He would have said something we feel could be substantial to us if he had said the 1968 constitution (Westminster drafted constitution) was being reinstated so that we can start working on it if we need any changes,” Mngomezulu said.

Mngomezulu said the King should remove the King’s Proclamation No 12 of 1973 which forbids political activity and the freedom of gathering.

“With that decree still in force, we feel he hasn’t moved even an inch,” Mngomezulu said.
Swaziland plans to diversify revenue

By Tom Holloway

Mbabane — Derek von Wissel, the finance minister, announced plans for revenue diversification and drastic reforms in Swaziland’s tax system in his budget speech this week, in line with his earlier warning of a voluntary structural adjustment programme.

The adjustment, Von Wissel said, was a pre-emptive measure to avoid such a programme being imposed later on Swaziland by the International Monetary Fund.

One of the urgent requirements the budget speech focused on, was the need for the government to diversify and broaden its revenue sources, of which more than 50 percent come from the South African Customs Union (SACU).

The SACU formula was being renegotiated which could result in a reduction in Swaziland’s revenue share, said Von Wissel.

To safeguard against this the reforms include a move away from reliance on direct taxation to indirect taxation which would include increases in sales tax and fuel tax.

The minister said that of the overall reforms, the changes to the personal income tax system will benefit taxpayers most. Taxpayers will be treated equally with all income, including benefits in kind, being taxed.

However, the highest rate of tax is to be reduced from 40 percent to 30 percent and a higher income threshold will protect the poorest who will be exempt from income tax.

To encourage job creation and investment, corporate tax is to be reduced from 37 percent to 30 percent and an improved company act will be introduced. Public entities will also be brought into the tax net.

A key point in the budget speech was the acceptably high government expenditure. Allocations to ministries have been cut and strict monitoring systems introduced. — Independent Foreign Service
Mandela's Secret Swazi Plan

Special discussions between King Mswati III and Nelson Mandela were held in a policy that abolishes the domicile of the policy and ethnic groups in the Swaziland region. These discussions were held in the presence of both leaders, with Mandela expressing his support for the King's efforts to bring peace and unity to the nation. The Swazi people were deeply grateful for Mandela's efforts, and the King expressed his appreciation for his support. These discussions were held in secret, and their details remain confidential.
Swazis get a big boost

A R44 million loan scheme introduced by Swaziland's King Mswati III to assist the establishment and development of small and medium business projects went into full operation on Tuesday.

Interviewed about the scheme yesterday, Finance Ministry director, Bill Farmer, said the loan scheme would be operated through established intermediaries such as banks.

The scheme was intended to benefit Swazis unable to provide the security usually required by commercial banks, and enable them to obtain loans to start up their own business projects.

Farmer said the applicants' proposed projects had to be viable.

Referring to the failure of similar loan schemes in the past, he said the ministry and the fund's management committee had made sure that abuse of funds would not take place. - Sapa.
Swaziland reform 'too slow'

MBABANE: Swazis would lose confidence in their government if democratic reforms in the kingdom were not speeded up, a member of parliament said yesterday.

"If the process continues to move at the slow rate, the people's hopes and confidence in this government will be eroded," Mr Dumisani Masango told parliament.

"I therefore ask the prime minister to give this house a detailed explanation on the progress Swaziland has made on the reforms and include the time-frame in which coming changes will be implemented."

Masango said that since reforms were introduced little progress had been made.

"The democratic reforms introduced more than three years ago have raised the people's hopes for a more democratic Swaziland. But it seems everything has stopped and the changes, if any, are hardly noticeable."

Masango's comments follow the announcement of plans by the opposition Democratic Alliance for a new round of demonstrations to demand political freedom.

The alliance said its supporters would march to the prime minister's office tomorrow and parliament on Saturday to demand the repeal of a royal decree that outlawed political parties in 1973.

The kingdom of 900,000 people is the only Southern African country where political parties are forbidden.

The alliance has demanded that King Mswati place himself above politics and allow normal political activity.

His father and predecessor, King Sobhuza II, issued the 1973 decree suspending the constitution, which dated from independence from Britain in 1968.

Unions brought the country to a standstill with a week-long general strike in January over the issue.

They said last month they had suspended talks with the government and would not return to negotiations until all oppressive laws were removed.

Mswati has allowed parliamentary elections and limited political activity but the ban on parties remains.

A police spokesman said action would be taken if the demonstrations went ahead. — Reuter
Muslims warn 'insulting' Swazi priests

MBABANE - Priests from the Zionist sect here have brought down the wrath of Islam on their heads and have been warned they could face the same fate as Satanic Verses author Salman Rushdie. This follows the recent call by a number of Swazi priests for all non-Christian religious groups in Swaziland, to be banned.

The priests were attending a mass gathering at King Mswati's royal residence at Lomita when some of them said the prophet Mohammed was a criminal and a murderer.

King Mswati rejected the priests' remarks which have brought sharp rebukes from other church leaders. Muslims here have reacted angrily through the local press. One infuriated writer warned that, no-one, not even the Swazi priests who called the prophet Mohammed a murderer, could be forgiven for insulting Islam.

The writer warned the priests that, just as the author Salman Rushdie had been sentenced to death for insulting Islam in his book, their names could also be on the death list very soon.

The Zionist priests also accused the non-Christian church groups of misleading the Swazi nation in their religious speeches.
Studies show oil near Kenyan border

Two foreign firms to sink wells in new Tanzanian oil venture

By Joe Khamisi

Nairobi — A new search for oil will begin later this year along Tanzania’s Indian Ocean coastline after preliminary seismic studies showed there is oil in the area.

Two foreign companies, Dublin International Petroleum and Canada’s Antrim Resources, have been granted licences to prospect for oil.

Officials from the two companies will travel to Dar es Salaam at the end of next month to sign agreements covering the project.

Memoranda of understanding have already been signed with Tanzania Petroleum Development.

The agreements will run for 11 years. The two firms will commit $30 million to sink wells between the mainland and Zanzibar within the Tanga-Pemba-Zanzibar triangle bordering Kenya.

The coastal project is the second contract awarded to the Canadian firm.

Antrim Resources has been doing exploratory drilling in the Rufiji river basin and in Mandawa in the Lindi region.

The latest agreements call for profit-sharing, with part of any discovered oil going to the investors and the rest being retained by Tanzania Petroleum Development.

The development corporation has also called for the training of Tanzanians and the transfer of technology.

The only significant oil find in Tanzania has involved commercially viable gas reserves on the island of Songoongo and Kivu in southern Tanzania.

Experts from HBT Agra, another Canadian firm, have been waiting to lay a 220km natural gas pipeline from Songoongo to Dar es Salaam.

Development corporation officials said the work was being delayed to allow five natural gas wells in the area to be rehabilitated.

The Dubai-based Schlumberger Oilfield Assistance has reportedly won a $15 million deal to repair the wells. The tender will be formally awarded in a few weeks.

The Songoongo gas-to-electricity project was scheduled to start generating power for sale to the Tanzania Electricity Supply Company in 1998, but delays are expected.

Environmentalists have been worried that construction of the pipeline would pose environmental problems to humans and animals. But HBT Agra officials said safety precautions had been taken to safeguard lives.

The pipeline would avoid sensitive areas such as human settlements, mangrove forests and designated wetlands.

The $300 million project is funded by the World Bank and the European Investment Bank.

Experts said the project would ease widespread power shortages in Tanzania and help industries boost production once completed.

It would also replace costly oil imports with the cost-effective natural gas.

Tanzanian officials expect the project will provide a dependable supply of natural gas for at least 20 years. Experts said the Songoongo gas field had enough reserves for 35 years.

The project will be able to process 70 million cubic metres of gas a day without compression.

The gas will be transported through the pipeline to five gas turbine generators at the Ubungo power station in Dar es Salaam.

Two of the generators were installed last year to alleviate the country’s electricity shortage.

They were built by the Johannesburg-based Rossherville Construction in conjunction with North American companies.

Tanzania hopes to export generated power from the project by linking its grid to neighbouring countries. — Independent Foreign Service
Swazi king sacks prime minister

MBABANE: Swazi King Mswati III said yesterday he was retiring Prime Minister Mblimi Dlamini — but was not explicit about the reasons.

The king told a public rally: “The people of Swaziland are warned to show respect for their culture and traditional authorities.”

The names of a national council of royal advisers would be announced, he said.

Mswati told the meeting South African President Nelson Mandela, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Botswanan President Ketumile Masire would visit Swaziland today "to personally witness Swaziland’s unique democracy in action".

However, Mandela’s spokesman, Mr Parks Mankellana, said Mandela would not be visiting the kingdom today. "The president had no plans to visit Swaziland this week," he added.

Most of Swaziland’s banned political leadership attended the meeting, expecting the king to announce significant political reforms. — Sapa
Sugar a sweetener for smaller farmers

MBABANE — The future of small-scale sugar cane growers in Swaziland looks bright. They farm 10% of the 600,000 tons of sugar produced each year.

The sugar industry earns 23% of the gross domestic product (GDP), 33% of foreign currency income and makes up 67% of total agricultural production.

It was like a voice crying in the wilderness when the Commonwealth Development Corporation called on Swazi farmers to take up sugar cane farming in 1962. Traditional chiefs were suspicious of an emerging industry ruled by foreign interests in which Swazis would be merely providers of labour. Only a trickle took up sugar cane farming, at the foot of the Labombo Mountains.

When the Swaziland sugar industry strategic plan was reviewed in 1990, the industry began to involve Swazi farmers in sugar cane growing.

Initially, local chiefs were suspicious, believing they might lose land. Some branded those who allowed sugar cane growing as sellouts bent on trading off their forefathers' land to industrialists.

One such dispute was that of Chief Madlenya Gamedze of the Siphedvent area, who came under fire from Chief Bheleza Ngamphalala of KuNgamphalala for approving sugar cane cultivation. King Mswati intervened to save stalled sugar cane projects. In October 1992 the king formally approved sugar cane farming on national lands, which came as a relief to many small-scale farmers.

The royal visit, coupled with a radio and television campaign by the Swaziland Sugar Association saying “Sugar is the Real Swazi Gold”, has brought a surge of interest in sugar cane farming among subsistence farmers.

To facilitate the smooth transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming, the industry gave the Swaziland Sugar Association’s extension services responsibility for assisting emerging small-scale cane growers.

Large sugar estates like Mhluwe Sugar Company and Ubombo Ranches are also helping growers.

The assistance given includes land preparation, irrigation, fertiliser application, weed control, pest and disease control, harvesting, transport and financial advice.

These new farmers hope that sugar cane farming will help to improve the quality of life of their communities.

The chairman of the Magwanyana Farmers’ Cooperative, Albert Fakudze, believes sugar cane is the keystone to economic development in Swaziland.

"It is an answer to economic life like poverty, unemployment and the poor national infrastructure," he says. — AIA.
Swazi Sacking

is a sop.

By NIMROD MABUZA

Mbabane

KING MISWATI III of
Swaziland, misjudged when he dismissed his un-
popular Prime Minister,
Prince Mblalini, this week in
an apparent effort to ap-
pease his politically stilled subjects.

The king will name a new
premier once he has re-
cived recommendations
from the Swazi National
Council but political ana-
lysts and opposition
groups in the kingdom say
that nothing short of a re-
peal of the 1973 decree by
his father, King Sobhuza,
which banned political par-
ties, will satisfy the aspira-
tions of the Swazi people.

Jan Sithole, secretary gen-
eral of the Swazi Federation of
Trade Unions, described the sack-
ing of Prince Mblalini as
"changing the lid of a Coca-
Cola bottle to a Pepsi".

Jerry Nxumalo, secretary gen-
eral of the Swazi Democ-
ocratic Alliance —
a coalition of political
pressure groups — said he
was disappointed that the
king did not use the oppor-
tunity to announce signifi-
cant and urgently needed
political reforms.
Big future for cane growers

By Vuyisile Hlatshwayo

THE future of small-scale sugar cane growers in Swaziland looks bright.

Last year they produced 10 percent of the 500,000 tons of sugar produced in Swaziland.

The sugar industry contributes 23 percent to the country's gross domestic product, earns 33 percent of foreign currency and comprises 67 percent of total agricultural production.

The cane growers have come a long way since the Commonwealth Development Corporation called on Swazi farmers to take up sugar cane farming in 1962.

The traditional chiefs were suspicious of an emerging industry ruled by foreign interests in which Swazis would be merely providers of labour. Only a handful took up sugar cane farming, at the foot of the Labombo Mountains.

When the Swaziland sugar industry strategic plan was implemented in 1990, the industry began to involve indigenous Swazi farmers in sugar cane growing.

Initially, local chiefs were sceptical, fearing that they might lose land. Some branded those who allowed sugar cane growing as sell-outs bent on trading their forefathers' land off to industrialists.

One such dispute involved Chief Mdlaneva Gamedze of the Siphofaneni area, who came under fire from Chief Bhodze Ngezamphalala of KwaNgezamphalala for approving sugar cane growing.

King Mswati intervened to save stalled sugar cane growing projects.

In October 1992, Mswati formally approved sugar cane farming on national lands, which came as a relief to many small-scale farmers.

Since the royal assent, coupled with a radio and television campaign by the Swaziland Sugar Association rallying under the banner: "Sugar is the real Swazi gold", there has been a surge of interest among subsistence farmers.

Smooth transition

To facilitate the smooth transition from subsistence to commercial farming, the industry has charged the Swaziland Sugar Association Extension Services with assisting the emerging small-scale cane growers.

Large sugar estates such as Mhlume Sugar Company and Umbono Ranches are also helping.

Among other things, the assistance covers land preparation, irrigation, fertiliser application, transport, weed, pest and disease control as well as financial advice.

Farmers are excited with the new developments in the cane growing industry. — Africa Information Afrique.
Swazis without a Prime Minister

16 Africa
Phosa calls for closer Swazi corridor links

Mduduzi ka Harvey

THE time had come for SA and Swaziland to translate the Maputo-Mpumalanga corridor initiative into projects that would create sustainable jobs for both countries.

Mpumalanga premier Matthews Phosa was addressing, in the capital Mbabane yesterday, a joint meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Economics Association of Swaziland. The projects would focus on water shortage, electricity supply, tourism and trade.

He said he had “always emphasised the need for regional economic and development co-operation between neighbouring countries, which aimed at “softening political borders”. This vision of regional co-operation “had now begun to materialise”.

He said the concept of having a regional circle of friends who were bonded together by co-operation and economic growth would make “international investors feel safe to invest”.

He said that in the tourism sector negotiations were currently taking place for the development of a national park that would border Mpumalanga, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

He said inward investment would bring capital into the region and for this reason he supported President Mandela’s vision of a privatisation drive that would introduce into the economy new skills, technology, innovative management ideas and a better spread of wealth.

Swaziland Railway CEO Gideon Mahlalela said the development of various corridors should be “dictated by rational economic reasoning” — rather than by political decisions — because this would lead to undue competition between the different corridors and the marginalisation of certain groups.

He said in the past Swaziland “had been left out” of the Mpumalanga-Maputo corridor development project and yet it was geographically and economically an integral part of the eastern sub-region. He said Swaziland’s rail network was ready to integrate into the corridor project and he called on the SA and Swaziland governments to consider a railway that would link Swaziland with all the east coast ports.
Appeal to Swazi teachers to talk

Mbabane - Swaziland acting Prime Minister Dr Sishaye Nxumalo yesterday appealed to the nation to play a constructive, positive and meaningful role in the kingdom's "march" towards reform and democracy.

In a statement prepared for delivery in Mbabane, Nxumalo appealed to the country's teachers to call off their strike and settle their problems through dialogue.

He emphasised the need for peaceful transition in Swaziland.

"Bear in mind that our unique tinkhundla system of government was chosen by the Swazi people, and will be changed only by the will of the people," he said.

"Any reform will be determined in the forthcoming constitutional forum announced by King Mswati III, and I therefore call on the people of Swaziland to move forward in unity and play their part in this process which is so vital to the future of the kingdom," he said.

"It is through this process," Nxumalo said, "that the Swazi people will chart our new course and provide the new mandate for the democratic future of Swaziland. In this way the country will develop to the stage where it can take its rightful place in the Southern African Development Community and beyond."

Nxumalo warned that turmoil resulting from such action could erode the investment climate in the highly competitive international arena.

"If that happens, we could be left behind, and we would struggle for alternatives," he said.

"Action such as strikes and stayaways can harm the economy, diminish foreign and local investor confidence, and stifle economic growth. This would mean fewer jobs and less pay, which would be detrimental to the Swazi man in the street," he concluded. "Sowetan"
Water scheme workers on strike

ABOUT 3,000 employees of the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme were still on strike at their camp outside Butha-Buthe yesterday. A project contractor said work at construction sites had ground to a halt. About 10 South Africans, apparently fearing for their lives, had resigned, he said, after objections to the participation of South Africans in the scheme.

NEWS ROUND-UP
Swazi king prepares new constitution

(312) Star 25/7/96

Emergency consultative meeting of SADC countries takes place without Mswati III

SAPA

President Nelson Mandela yesterday said he was convinced that Swazi monarch King Mswati III had embarked on a path which would result in Swaziland becoming a fully democratic state.

Speaking in Pretoria after his return from Maputo, where he attended talks on problems in Swaziland, Mandela said moves towards democracy in the kingdom had to be expedited.

"I believe that His Majesty on his own is already taking this role. For that reason we are convinced the way forward that he mapped out is one that, in due course, will mirror the aspirations of the people of Swaziland."

The talks in Maputo were also attended by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Botswana President Ketumile Masire and host president Joaquim Chissano.

Mandela said Mswati had sent acting prime minister Sisayi Nxumalo to brief the four presidents on the king's strategy to bring democracy to Swaziland.

"The king wanted to come, but apparently as they were waiting for him at the airport, they received a message that he had contracted flu," Mandela aid.

Swaziland, the only southern African country in which political parties are banned, has been rocked by a series of pro-democracy strikes and protest actions.

Mandela left for Maputo yesterday morning to attend an "emergency consultative meeting".

He said Nxumalo had told them the king would make an important announcement tomorrow on a constitutional commission, which would consult with the Swazi nation on the way forward towards a fully democratic state.

The body would also deal with the powers of the Swazi monarch.

Mswati would also announce the appointment of a new prime minister.
'Swaziland geared for democracy'

The kingdom has been rocked by strike actions by pro-democracy organisations

President Nelson Mandela said yesterday he was convinced Swazi monarch King Mswati III had embarked on a path which would result in Swaziland becoming a fully democratic state.

Speaking to journalists in Pretoria after his return from Maputo, where he attended talks on problems in Swaziland, Mandela said moves towards democracy in the country had to be expedited.

"I believe that His Majesty on his own is already taking this role," he said. "For that reason, we are convinced the way forward that he mapped out is one that, in due course, will mirror the aspirations of the people of Swaziland," he said.

The talks in Maputo were also attended by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Botswana President Ketumile Mathapa and host President Joaquin Chissano.

Mandela said Mswati had sent acting Prime Minister Siadhai Naumalo to brief the four presidents on the king's strategy to bring democracy to Swaziland.

"The king wanted to come, but apparently, as they were waiting for him at the airport, they received a message that he had contracted flu," Mandela said.

Swaziland is the only southern African country in which political parties are banned, and has for more than a year been rocked by a series of pro-democracy strikes and protest actions.

Referring to weekend reports on a romantic link between him and Graca Machel, widow of former Mozambique president Samora Machel, Mandela quipped: "I must assure you, I didn't go there for romance."

He said Naumalo had told them Mswati "would make" an "important announcement" on Friday on a constitutional commission, which would consult with the Swazi nation on the way forward towards a fully democratic state.

Mandela said Swaziland was not an isolated country. It was part of the SADC region, where all the member countries had democratically-elected governments. - Sapa.
Presidents hold urgent talks on Swaziland

Tim Cohen

CAPE TOWN — President Nelson Mandela and three other southern African presidents held urgent, unscheduled talks in Maputo yesterday, following fears that imminent moves towards democracy in Swaziland would be rejected as inadequate and plunge the kingdom into fresh unrest.

The attempt at pre-empting a new bout of labour unrest got off to a poor start, with Swazi King Mswati III’s last-minute decision not to attend the meeting. Mswati sent his acting prime minister, Sisayi Nxumalo, instead.

Sources said Mandela, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Botswana President Ketumile Masire and host President Joaquim Chissano were concerned about announcements due to be made by Mswati on Friday.

Sapa reports Mswati intends to initiate constitutional reform in Africa’s last kingdom and announce members of a new assembly at a national meeting at Ludzidzini Royal Kraal on Friday. The group would be responsible for implementing a long-awaited constitutional review promised by the king earlier this year, aimed at drawing up a democratic constitution.

It was also hoped the king would announce the name of a new prime minister to replace Prince Mhlangeni, whose “retirement” was announced by the king two weeks ago.

The constitutional reforms follow strikes and civil unrest in Swaziland earlier this year to back demands for a return to democratic rule.

Mswati’s father, King Sobhuza II, outlawed political parties when he introduced emergency rule in 1973 and suspended the Westminster-style constitution inherited at independence.

Yesterday’s meeting of presidents was intended to impress on Mswati the need to take into account the views of all interest groups in Swaziland, particularly those of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, which has featured strongly in the push for democracy. The meeting was also intended to be a follow-up to a meeting in March, attended by Mandela, Mugabe, Masire and Mswati, at which tricky issues involved in the kingdom’s democratisation were reportedly discussed.

A state visit by Mandela to the kingdom was to have taken place after this meeting, but it never came about, although discussions have continued.

Meanwhile, Sapa-DPA reports that Swazi teachers and public servants are furious over a cabinet decision to deduct 33 days’ pay from their July and August salaries, following their month-long strike which was called off last week. Teachers and public servants demanded an 18% salary increase but were offered just over 10%.
Mswati splits pro-democracy movement

Drew Forrest

SWAZI monarch King Mswati III had split the country's pro-democracy movement by announcing a 29-member constitutional review commission, a senior Swazi campaigner for democracy said yesterday.

Kislon Shongwe, former president of the outlawed People's United Democratic Movement, said that the commission would not solve the simmering constitutional crisis in the country or create the political certainty the Swazi economy required.

Shongwe said he was "puzzled" that the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions had agreed to take part in the commission, named by Mswati on Friday.

The union movement was the spearhead of the Swaziland Democratic Alliance, which had agreed it would not take part in any constitutional review until the 1973 royal ban on political parties was lifted.

To be democratic, the process should involve elected delegates from organised formations, Shongwe said. However, the king had made it clear that the commission's members would serve in their individual capacities.

Shongwe said the movement's leadership was "vacillating" over whether to take part. Sapa reports that its president, Mario Masuku, said the movement would attend the commission's opening meeting "to see what is happening.

Mswati did not specify the commission's terms of reference, saying it should chart its own path.

Shongwe said that as most of the commission's members "supported the status quo", it was unlikely to arrive at a broadly acceptable dispensation.

There could be no political settlement without a democratically formed constitutional assembly.
As the sun set on the horizon, the peaceful village of King Shlami in Swaziland was bathed in the warm glow of the setting sun. Children played in the fields, their laughter carrying on the breeze. The aroma of spicy spices filled the air, emanating from the nearby market. The village was a bustling hub of activity, with men and women engaged in various tasks, their faces reflecting the hard work and dedication that sustained their community.

The village was known for its rich history and cultural heritage. Its inhabitants were proud of their traditions and were committed to preserving them for future generations. The village leaders were keen to ensure that the younger generation was well-versed in the importance of these customs.

One such tradition was the annual festival held in honor of the late King Shlami. The festival was a time of celebration, when the village came together to remember their late king and honor his legacy. The festival was a time of joy, with music and dance filling the air, and the aroma of traditional Swazi dishes wafting through the streets.

As the festival approached, preparations were underway. The villagers worked tirelessly, ensuring that every detail was taken care of. They decorated the village with colorful flags and banners, and the central square was transformed into a vibrant festival ground.

The festival was not just a celebration of King Shlami's life, but also a time for the community to come together and strengthen their bonds. It was a reminder of the importance of unity and resilience, and a testament to the strength of the Swazi people.
Sweet deal for Maputo

Vuyisile Hlatshwayo

After four years of lying idle, the Maputo Sugar Terminal is now in full swing following overhaul and modernisation by the Swaziland Sugar Association and the Zimbabwe Sugar Association.

Since June 10 1995, the two associations have exported 283 000 tonnes to the European Union (EU). Mozambique and Zambia also send small consignments through the terminal.

In 1992, Swaziland and Zimbabwe clinched an eight-year lease to operate the terminal as a joint venture. Storage capacity is 140 000 tonnes, divided among three sheds. This year the two countries are expected to export 400 000 tonnes, rising to 500 000 tonnes next year.

Exports through Maputo were stopped in 1991 because of the extremely high prevalence of theft at the port, with Swaziland alone losing about 10 000 tonnes in that year. The two countries were forced to switch to Durban, 600km further away and about 20% more expensive.

Security measures have been stepped up, with liner trains travelling non-stop to Siwesi in Mozambique where they are put under 24-hour guard. At Maputo, Manica Freight provides round-the-clock security guards and the fence around the terminal is electrified.

Swaziland will export 195 000 tonnes this year, mostly to the EU and the United States. Zimbabwe will export roughly the same. — AIA
Swazis pass land grab motion

MBABANE — A motion passed yesterday by Swaziland’s senate to nationalise all land in the country has sent shock waves through private and business sectors.

The motion, made by conservative traditional Swazi chief and former prime minister Prince Bhekimpile, seeks to repeal the Concessions Act of 1907.

In an emotional speech, Bhekimpile referred to former Swazi kings Mbandzani and Mswati I who had given vast concessions of land to European settlers. Bhekimpile said such land was leased to them free of charge, but they had since claimed ownership and used or sold it as they pleased.

This, he said, was tantamount to stealing the land that had been lent to them by the kings. Everyone claiming to own land in Swaziland should be made to give such land back to its rightful and original owner, the king.

Bhekimpile made no mention of compensation in his submission, saying it was shocking that King Mswati III had to spend millions in buying back concessions land needed for development.

Natural Resources Minister the Rev Muntu Dlamini, who unsuccessfully opposed the motion, warned senators it would have serious political and economic implications.

Landowners, subsistence farmers, business leaders and cabinet ministers have condemned the move.

The executive secretary of the Federation of Swaziland Employers, Mosa Hope, said the motion was bad news for Swaziland, which was about to embark on a historic constitutional reform exercise. — Sapa.
African Business

Swaziland prime minister pulls the plug on senate’s motion

Land-grab fears allayed

By Tom Holloway

Mbabane — Sibusiso Dlamini, Swaziland’s prime minister, is adamant that the government will not implement a senate motion aimed at nationalising privately owned land.

He was responding to last Monday’s bid by Prince Bhekimpi, a former prime minister, to repeal the Concessions and Partitions Act of 1907 that allows private ownership of freehold land.

Dlamini said on Thursday that changing the law would have many implications, one of which would be the disturbance of peace and stability.

He said the government would help Swazis buy farms and other freehold properties through loans from the government-owned Swazi Bank, the Swaziland Building Society and commercial banks.

“Land is an important commodity and the repercussions of banning the buying and selling land would be too severe even to be considered.”

He said Swazis and foreigners could continue to buy and sell land in Swaziland.

Dlamini’s comments came after a special joint caucus meeting in parliament held in camera on Thursday afternoon.

The prime minister said that Muntu Dlamini, the natural resources and energy minister, instructed by the senate to prepare a Bill to implement the motion to retrieve the land, would not be charged with contempt if he refused because the rejection of the senate’s motion was a collective decision by the Cabinet.

The prime minister said the entire government would have to be charged if the Senate pursued this course of action.

The relief expressed by the public and the business community was summed up by Musa Hope, the executive secretary of the Federation of Swaziland Employers, who commended the government’s swift action “in arresting an event that was fast eroding business confidence” in Swaziland.

“The Cabinet’s decision was further evidence that the new prime minister, Dr Dlamini, is determined to stamp out inconsistencies and contradictions within the government,” Hope said. — Independent Foreign Service
EC aid to pay for Swazi developments

Mbabane — The European Commission (EC) will provide R17.5 million for an access road system and R2.5 million to expand maize storage facilities in Swaziland.

The two agreements between the EC and the Swaziland government signed at the weekend bring the development aid to Swaziland to more than R1 billion over the past 20 years.

The construction of a dual carriageway bridge with access roads in Swaziland's Eastern Lowveld will improve communications in this deeply rural area and make access to milling and marketing facilities for hundreds of small sugar cane growers easier.

The other project is to expand the maize storage capacity at Swaziland's central grain silo complex at Matsapa in central Swaziland which will improve food security for the country during droughts.

The EC's recent decision to downgrade its status in Swaziland from its delegation to an office had raised fears in the Swaziland government that EC development aid to the kingdom might also be reduced.

Gabriel Lee, the head of the EC delegation in Mbabane, assured the government the downgrading would not adversely affect the EC aid commitments to Swaziland for the present five-year Lomé IV period totalling more than R170 million.

This amount will be devoted largely to the agriculture and rural development sectors and business, and will not be affected by the EC's transformation of the EC delegation to an office. — Independent Foreign Service
Swazi women still lack status

By Vuyisile Hlatshwayo

Mbabane – Common law and Unmodified Customary Law derived from Swazi traditions regulate the status of women to that of minors. They are completely controlled by the male head of the family.

This customary law, which still overrides the common law based on the Roman-Dutch legal system when it comes to marital power held by men over women, makes it extremely difficult for the women's struggle for equal rights.

All sorts of laws keep women under male control. For instance, women cannot be chiefs in Swaziland, and the immigration office requires a married woman to have her husband's or guardian's permission to obtain a passport.

Also, while women represent about 30 per cent of the labour force, the Employment Act discriminates against female employees.

Women married in community of property do not enjoy equality. Men, always regarded as the head of the family, are free to take unilateral decisions regarding family property like cattle, land, estates and movables.

According to Maureen Magwaza, local programme officer of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), the biggest handicap of customary law is its constraints on women, especially married women.

Under customary law or marriage in community of property, married women may not own property. The Deed Registration Act prohibits married women from registering property in their own names. Married women can only sue or be sued with their husbands' involvement.

Men can transfer or sell family property without the consent or knowledge of their wives.

Recently attorney-general Sipho Zwane transferred his family estate without the knowledge of his wife. She has had to take legal action against him to get her share.

Swazi Nation land is controlled by the chiefs and held in the national trust by the monarchy. The chiefs do not entertain requests for land from married women. In the case of single women, they can access land through their male relatives.

Title deed land is urban land controlled by the city council. Those married in community of property cannot register title deed land in their own names – it must be registered in their husband's name. This is spelt out in the Land Act No 37 of 1968.

Inheritance laws are very hard on widows. According to Swazi law and custom, a widow cannot inherit her deceased husband's property in her own right, but through their inkhosana, the son chosen by the family council. The inkhosana inherits the estate and livestock.

This custom excludes women from being heirs because they will probably leave the family when they re-marry. The widow is left powerless as her in-laws grab the property she shared with her husband.

A widow must observe one month of confinement, but a widower does not. Her movements and public conduct are restricted. Widows working in public places must cover their mourning weeds because members of the royal family might see them.

Policewomen and nurses are not allowed to wear mourning clothes. These mourning rituals place working women at a disadvantage in terms of productivity and eligibility for promotion.

Several organisations are working to improve women's rights. WILDAF, for example, informs women about their rights.

"We want the women to know that their status is equal to that of men. They should fight for the representation of their rights even in the new constitution," says Magwaza.

Swaziland Women Against Abuse works on all forms of abuse – from violence to restrictions on property ownership and access to land.

The Council of Swaziland Churches also helps to provide legal assistance on matters relating to maintenance. – Africa Information Afrique.
IMF commends Swaziland's pre-emptive actions
EU deal threatens Swazi sugar industry

Louise Cook

A FREE trade agreement between the European Union (EU) and SA that included cheap sugar imports could "profoundly jeopardise" Swaziland’s sugar industry, according to a European Research Office study.

The study, stemming from investigations of the effect of a free trade agreement between SA and the EU on African countries, said nearly half of Swaziland’s sugar was exported to SA.

Sugar accounts for 67% of its agricultural production, 23% of GDP and 57% of foreign exchange earnings.

"For the EU to secure an early elimination of import duties and non-tariff barriers on sugar and chocolate confectionary (from SA) without addressing EU export and producer subsidies on those products was an obvious offensive interest. This would seriously affect the price of sugar and confectionary products on the SA market and the price and market share of Swazi sugar and confectionary producers."

Swaziland faced serious budgetary difficulties without taking into account the effect of an EU-SA free trade agreement, the study said.

"In Namibia, sectors vulnerable to a free trade agreement included beef, beverages, motor vehicle components and fisheries, while in Lesotho generic pharmaceutical products, household electrical goods and canned vegetable production were at risk."
Swazi sugar war leaves bitter taste

By DON ROBERTSON

THE Swaziland sugar industry has slammed what it describes as "sanctions" imposed on it by its SA counterparts, asking whether this is in keeping with the policy of opening up trade with Africa.

Only last week, Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin committed South Africa to increased trade with sub-Saharan Africa.

At the International Sugar Organisation conference in London last week, Swaziland Sugar Association general manager Andy Colhoun challenged the actions taken by the SA Sugar Association in denying it access to export, research and training facilities. Swaziland is a member of the Southern African Customs Union and is entitled to export products to member states, he says, but South Africa's actions represent ineffective sanctions.

Swaziland and SA sugar producers have been at loggerheads since the beginning of the year, with South Africa claiming that Swazi exports of sugar into South Africa could reach about 230,000 tons this year, costing the SA industry more than R200-million.

Efforts by the two bodies to reach agreement failed and in September, South Africa advised the Swazi association that from April next year, export facilities at Maydon Wharf in Durban and research and extension facilities offered by the experimental station at Mount Edgecombe would be withdrawn. It also immediately withdrew training facilities and access to the Sugar Milling Research Institute.

In the past, Swaziland producers paid about R3.5-million a year for these services.

Colhoun told the multinational ISO conference that because the domestic price of SA sugar was substantially higher than the international price, customs union members competed to sell in this market. He insists, however, that sugar from Swaziland is generally not sold on the retail market, but through value-added products.

This stems from the early 1990s when SA sugar production slumped because of the drought and it was unable to meet demand. Companies such as Cadbury's, Coca-Cola and Nestlé established operations in Swaziland and products such as chewing gum, chocolates and fruit concentrates containing Swazi sugar were exported to South Africa.

"Now that SA sugar production has recovered, the SA Sugar Association is unhappy about products containing Swazi sugar entering the market although Swaziland has every right to do it," says Colhoun.
Prominent Swiss support Kangaroo courts

Mob Justice Rules in Swaziland

Focus on Africa
Swaziland simmers

Swaziland is experiencing the pain of transition to a modern democracy. In July King Mswati announced moves towards democratic reform, including the appointment of Sibusiso Dlamini as the new prime minister.

Labour mass action, which had paralysed Swaziland earlier last year, as well as pressure from the country's southern African neighbours, were key factors in precipitating this process.

Emerging after a secret meeting with southern African heads of state in Pretoria, Mswati pledged to embark on reforms to satisfy the political aspirations of the people of Swaziland.

Despite this commitment, what the king has shown thus far is a determination to consolidate his regime's repressive apparatus and to crush the trade unions and the democratic movement.

"Reform" has been restricted to the appointment of the new premier, the establishment of the Swazi National Council and the setting up of a Constitutional Review Committee, which includes the president of the banned opposition movement and an office of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions.

The members of the latter are, however, serving in their capacity as ordinary citizens and not as representatives of organised political interests, which are not recognised in Swaziland.

Over the last five years the Swazi government has embarked on a non-stop process of setting up hand-picked commissions to give the impression that reforms are under way.

What the people of Swaziland want is an irreversible and all-inclusive process of democratic transformation with an agreed time frame and negotiated terms of reference.

What Mswati has done thus far amounts to a ploy to delay the democratic revolution and perpetuate the status quo.

Tom Dlamini, a member of the Swaziland Democratic Alliance and a veteran unionist, says Mswati's so-called reforms are nothing but "a ploy to delay the democratic revolution".

The unions and the SDA have set preconditions designed to "level the political playing field" before they will participate in any reform process.

One of these is the unbanning of political parties and the lifting of the draconian Proclamation of 1973.

The SDA, to which the SFTU, Pudemo and other progressive organisations belong, has vowed to boycott Mswati's constitutional reform exercise. A programme of mass defiance and action which involves rallies has been adopted.

Historically, Swaziland has been an ideal place to do business. Most workplaces were not unionised and, where unions existed, they were weak. Unions were branded as "unSwazi".

With the changes taking place in the country, the business community has started to take stock of its position. Government can no longer be trusted to deliver and ensure a stable climate to do business.

The business community has repeatedly expressed concern about the deteriorating political situation. Business has paid the price through lost production and damage to property.

Promise to compensate

Furthermore, government's promise to compensate businesses for losses incurred as a result of the strikes never materialised.

Numerous behind-the-scenes meetings between members of the Federation of Swaziland Employers, Pudemo and the SFTU have taken place.

PSE and SFTU insiders see the close relationship between employers and workers as a departure from the adversarial and conflictual industrial relations which have characterised Swazi workplaces.

Instead, a more cooperative and productive labour relationship, based on mutual respect between the social partners, is being built.

The international community has also expressed concern at the situation in Swaziland.

A diplomatic source in Mbabane argued that the king should allow the will of the people "before the country is plunged into a turbulent and destructive civil war".

The spectre of civil war is not exaggerated. At a Red Cross seminar in Mbabane recently, a Pademo spokesman said: "The Red Cross must prepare for a looming violent conflict between the regime and democratic forces."

At its annual general congress in September, the SFTU resolved to continue mobilising and rallying workers around the struggle for democracy.

SFTU general secretary Jan Sithole said that no genuine reform process can take place in a climate of repression and intimidation. He urged affiliated unions to prepare for a tough struggle.

On October 5 the SFTU and SDA organised a massive rally in Manzini, the industrial capital. This was in defiance of a government announcement on national radio banning the rally in terms of the 1973 Proclamation.

Police Commissioner Edgar Hillary warned the nation that "those who defy the order will face the wrath of the law". Notwithstanding these threats, workers attended the rally in huge numbers.

The Swaziland regime's "reform" process seems to be nothing other than an attempt to reformulate policies and laws which are not only unworkable but also anachronistic.

It is designed to undermined the labour-led demands for far-reaching political change.

The democratic way forward is for the old Draconian measures and practices to give way to a new system that allows basic human rights and fundamental freedoms such as freedom of association, assembly and speech as well as full union rights for workers.

The current reform process in Swaziland has failed to create the necessary conditions for change. State repression continues. There is no scope for organised formations to participate in reform.

The terms, substance and pace of the process are dictated by the regime. Achieving a democratic dispensation in Swaziland will require much more than cosmetic tinkering with a totalitarian system.

(The writer is a sociology graduate of the Universities of Natal and Oxford. The article first appeared in the December issue of South African Labour Bulletin.)
leaders held
in Swaziland

Cosatu support for workers’ stayaway
to be focus of meeting with SA’s Nzo

SAPA, AFP
AND STAR FOREIGN SERVICE
Mbabane

As Swaziland braced itself for “more strike action, about 20 members of the Swaziland Democratic Alliance were held in a police swoop last night in Manzini.

The arrests took place as SDA members gathered in the town to assess the effects of yesterday’s worker stayaway called by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, four of whose principal leaders were arrested on Friday.

The strike which commenced yesterday was in support of 27 labour and political demands.

Andrew Mamba, chairman of the Swaziland Agricultural and Plantation Workers’ Union, said that according to his information, those held in last night’s raid included Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions vice-president, Joachim Dlamini, SFTU assistant secretary-general, Barbara Dlamini, and Jerry Nxumalo, chairman of the SDA.

The arrests followed a day of tension in Swaziland, where a stayaway called by the SFTU was almost 100% effective in the sugar growing and plantation industries and at the Bulendo asbestos mine on the Swaziland-South African border.

Heavy police contingents were present throughout yester-

day in all the country’s major centres to ensure that those who wished to work could do so without intimidation.

Swaziland’s Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini last week announced that he had ordered police “to shoot to kill” in order to maintain law and order during the strike.

The secretary-general of South Africa’s largest trade union federation, Cosatu, yesterday said its members will start a consumer boycott of Swaziland products if the SFTU leaders were not released.

The strike, which follows a similar campaign in late January last year, is aimed at pressuring King Mswati III to restore constitutional rule and scrap a 1973 decree that forbids political parties.

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo is to meet his Swazi counterpart, Arthur Khosa today amid rising tensions between the two countries over the stayaway.

Swaziland requested the meeting to protest about Cosatu’s outspoken support for the stayaway, which it regards as interference by the SA Government because Cosatu is a political ally of the ANC.

The SA Government has rejected this argument as a smoke-screen to hide Swaziland’s lack of democratic reforms, and will tell the Swazi foreign minister that this is the real cause of tension in the country.
Glamour for Democracy in Swaziland Kingdom

14/11/98

Ludwig von Mises Institute for Liberty

Champion for democracy in Swaziland

In the wake of the recent elections in Swaziland, there is increasing pressure for democracy in the country. The government's move to ban the opposition party, the Democratic Party of Swaziland (DPS), has sparked widespread protest and calls for free and fair elections. Activists are calling for international intervention to ensure democratic rights are respected.

The government's repression of opposition voices and free speech has sparked outrage among the Swazi population. The country's political landscape is dominated by the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), which has been in power for decades. Critics argue that the ANC's grip on power has stifled political competition and silenced opposition voices.

Amidst the growing tensions, the international community is urging the government to respect democratic rights and engage in open dialogue with opposition leaders. The United Nations (UN) has called for an independent investigation into reported human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests and political harassment.

The situation in Swaziland highlights the ongoing struggle for democracy in Africa. Despite the continent's rich history of independence movements and the establishment of several democracies, many nations continue to grapple with issues of corruption, political repression, and limited freedoms.

As the democratic movement gains momentum, it is crucial for the international community to remain vigilant and provide support to those advocating for free and fair elections. The promotion of democratic values is essential for the long-term stability and prosperity of Swaziland and other African nations.

In the words of the late Ludwig von Mises, "The future of humanity is tied to the future of freedom." The struggle for democracy in Swaziland is an urgent call to action for all who believe in the power of free and open societies.

Stay tuned for updates on the situation in Swaziland and the ongoing fight for democracy around the world.

Ludwig von Mises

Champion for Democracy

14/11/98
A king resisting change

International pressure is mounting for the Swaziland government to change its traditionalist monarchy into a democracy. Coudjoe Amankwaa explains why...

Swaziland, once an oasis of peace in Southern Africa, has been turned into a police state — soldiers and police, armed to the teeth, have been deployed to all corners of the country.

A workers' strike to back demands for a democracy, led by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU), entered its fourth week on Monday. There is still no sign of a solution as unrest continues.

The Swazi government has ordered that cars from all ministries should be handed over to the Swaziland Defence Force, and that police firmly deal with toyi-toying workers who are considered a threat to the country's stability.

The sight of police and soldiers patrolling every corner of the country is disconcerting, both to Swazis and tourists alike.

In Manzini a heavily armoured war tank emerges each time four trade union leaders appear in court. Security forces look at people suspiciously. Although a state of emergency has not been declared, there is tension in the air.

The SFTU leaders being charged are union president Richard Nxumalo, first vice president Themba Msibi, general secretary Jaa Sithole and deputy general secretary Jabulani Nxumalo.

They have been charged under the Public Order Act with molesting and intimidating bus operators.

Swaziland is being subjected to an acid test, with the workers' strike and unrest reflecting the general discontent at the lack of free political expression.

Last week alone six workers were shot and seriously wounded when police opened fire on a crowd of toyi-toying workers at Big Bend in eastern Swaziland.

Calls for transformation

Police claim they used rubber bullets but the unions contend that live ammunition was used on unarmed people.

The calls for transformation are met with mixed feelings from Swazi nationals.

Businessman Hamilton Dlamini told Soweto that democratic change was inevitable, but felt it should be gradual and driven by Swazis themselves and not by “radical foreign elements within the SFTU”.

He argued that democracy had to be managed by “the (native) people for the overall good of the Swazi people”.

“If Swaziland is to change, the international community should not wield a big stick at her,” Dlamini said.

Political activist James Mbatsa felt that the “small’s pace” with which the luhabudu (elders) wanted change to take place in Swaziland was unacceptable.

He felt that the SFTU was doing the right thing because the majority of the country’s people were “pressed by a ruthless system”.

What is obvious is that both conservatives (traditionalists) and liberals (modernists) agree that the time has come for change. But how far King Mswati 3 will push the transformation process remains to be seen.

The arrest four weeks ago of prominent union leaders has sparked off international criticism of the country’s government.

The irony is that no government ministry is claiming responsibility for the arrests, shifting the blame instead to the office of the director of public prosecution (DPP).

Political analysts say that the DPP’s office does not have a mandate to arrest union leaders on its own but must have acted on instructions from powers from above.

Meanwhile local and international pressure has been mounting on the Swazi government to release all the union leaders unconditionally or face sanctions.

Swaziland National Business Council spokesman Stanley Fakudze has called for the speedy release of the SFTU leaders. The Swaziland Council of Churches has also called for their unconditional release.

Congress of South African Trade Unions assistant general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi has said the federation has given an ultimatum to the Swazi government to release the unionists by March 3 or face blockades, pickets, marches, protests and a refusal by South African workers to handle Swazi goods.

Stop the repression

The Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council has also declared March 3 a day of solidarity with the SFTU.

In addition, a delegation of the Brussels-based International Confederation of Free Trade Unions led by Bill Brot told the Swazi government that unionists have a right to be involved in politics. He urged the government to release the union leaders.

The International Labour Organisation has also made a plea to the Swazi government to stop the repression of SFTU leaders, and the European Union has threatened to stop the import of Swazi sugar to European markets if the unionists are not released. Sugar is the backbone of the Swazi economy.

The Botswana Federation of Trade Unions said in a statement it was worried about the mental and physical safety of the unionists.

Sithole became ill last week during the trial of the unionists in the Manzini Magistrate’s Court.

United States president Bill Clinton’s special envoy, John Blaney, told the Swazi government to release the union leaders and enter into more fruitful negotiations aimed at bringing much-desired reforms to the kingdom.
Swazi govt slams Cosatu

By Abdul Milazi

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions blockade of Swaziland border posts yesterday went against the goals and interests of the Southern African Development Community and violated cooperation treaties signed recently by sub-Saharan countries.

This was said by the Swaziland government after members of Cosatu set up blockades on Swaziland borders yesterday in a bid to force the kingdom to allow union activities.

Cosatu decided at its executive meeting last month to take action against Swaziland after four trade unionists were arrested for planning a mass stayaway.

Swazi monarch King Mswati 3 has managed to suppress political activity through the King’s Decree of 1973.

Cosatu is demanding the amendment of Swaziland’s Labour Relations Act and the lifting of the state of emergency which has been in place since 1973.

International treaties

Swaziland minister of public service and information Mr Munu Mswane said Cosatu’s interference in the affairs of his country contravened SADC regional cooperation agreements such as the Southern African Customs Union and the United Nations Convention.

“If such regional and international treaties and protocols can be violated at the whim and will of certain organisations, then they surely have no significance and meaning to the states who are signatories,” said Mswane.

Mswane argued that Cosatu’s action would only help to disprove and put at risk the ideals of regional cooperation.

“Swaziland expects that all the people who live in the country shall abide by the laws of the country. It would be unfortunate if certain individuals or groups of people would use international pressure to support them commit offences against the country’s laws,” he argued.

Mswane said Swaziland was a sovereign state and did not see it proper for any formation from another country to take it upon itself to interfere in “purely domestic matters” of another country.
Swazis cry foul over Illovo-Lonrho deal

The Swaziland National Business Council has condemned the deal between Illovo, the South African sugar company, and Lonrho, in terms of which Illovo acquired Lonrho's sugar interests. These include a 60 percent stake in Ubonbo Ranches, one of Swaziland's oldest sugar operations. Jabavu Mphu, a consultant to the council, said yesterday that the deal denied Swazis full participation in the sugar industry.

"This development shunts Swazis to a position of mere spectators as the giants make off with millions from an industry regarded as gold in Swaziland," Mphu said. People in the Swazi sugar industry were disappointed that they were given no opportunity to bid for a stake in Ubonbo. Illovo could not be reached for a comment at the time of going to press. — Noka Hlophe, Johannesburg
No returns for Swazi venture

Aleta Armstrong

MBABANE—Swaziland's royal development agency, Tibofo Taka Ngwane, invested R70m in a company called Nutrition Dynamics over the past four years without receiving returns, sources involved in the project say.

Tibofo, which holds a portfolio of shares in some of the kingdom's top companies, operates outside the auspices of central government and is exempt from paying tax.

King Mswati holds the agency in trust for the people as head of the Swazi nation.

Nutrition Dynamics Swaziland (NDS) was formed in 1993 as a joint venture between Nutrition Dynamics International of the US and Tibofo. Sources said the initial plan was to make baby formula, with the US partner supplying and paying for part of the plant and equipment.

About $4m was paid to US company Folks Manley Machinery, ostensibly for machinery to make baby formula, with Tibofo raising $2m through a share issue.

Sources said NDS hired two Americans as MD and marketing manager the following year and started operating out of rented offices in Mbabane.

However, the company experienced a severe setback when the baby formula concept was rejected by the health ministry. The machinery was relocated to the former KwaNdebele homeland and has never been used.

Sources said NDS spent six months doing feasibility studies on the manufacture of breakfast cereals, then changed its mind and decided to make sweets instead.

A subsidiary company was formed in 1996 called Nutrition Dynamics SA, which bought Johannesburg-based Dick's Sweets for R1.5m. Dick's Sweets was liquidated a few months later and all its assets were sold by auction.

Sources said Tibofo then bought a plot of land at Matsapha industrial site and financed the construction of another sweet factory. The initial costs were R5.5m, but this escalated to R14m. The factory was completed in June last year and NDS moved in, but has yet to produce a single sweet.

NDS management has refused to comment on the developments.

Sources said the MD and marketing manager were dismissed in February.

Sources said staff had confronted management over rumoured retrenchments following the appointment of a new MD, W Lomahloza.
Swaziland vehicle assembler set to roll

Bañêle Ginindza

MBABANE — Afinta Motor Corporation is about to launch the assembly in Swaziland of up to 150 completely knocked down buses and trucks a month.

A spokesman for the Johannesburg-based company said the Swaziland concern would come on stream in a five-year, three-phase operation, and had already received an order from an East African country for 600 36-seater mid-sized buses a year.

Another order for 20 buses and trucks had also been received from Mozambique.

Initial production targets would be about 20 vehicles a month.

Regional markets would include Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Angola.

MD Graham Nicholls was involved in talks with the Swaziland government to sort out delays in the launch caused by bureaucratic problems.

Delays had also been caused by the need for plant refurbishment, with the company originally scheduled to start operations last month.

Afinta has been selling vehicles for the past 15 months through 22 dealerships across SA, with up to 70 trucks and buses a month being assembled at its plant in Isando. So far about 1 000 vehicles had been sold in SA, a spokesman said.

The company also planned to assemble cars and talks were being held with Italy’s Alfa Romeo and Japan’s DAI for the assembly of small vehicles. He said Afinta hoped to begin assembling sedans by next year.

US-based General Motors was looking to assemble a specific model of school bus in Swaziland, and this could tie up with Afinta’s plans to assemble such a vehicle, the spokesman said.

By William Wells and Jack Lindstrom

Commissioners threaten to quit constitutional process

Aleka Armstrong 26/11/1997

MBABANE — Swaziland's Constitutional Review Commission has been surrounded by controversy since its inception 10 months ago, and four commissioners have threatened to resign because they believe the new constitution will uphold the status quo.

King Mswati III appointed 30 members to the commission last August with the aim of providing a constitution within two years. The opposition groups objected, saying the commissioners had not been elected by anyone other than the king and only individuals would be allowed to make submissions, not groups.

They also argued the 1973 decree which banned political gatherings and banned political parties limited scope for debate. They said the public was wary of a clause in the Constitutional Review Commission decree that provided for fines and jail sentences if people insulted, disparaged or belittled the commission.

The four commissioners who have threatened to resign are Jerry Gule, Mahawa Mazya, Nkonzo Hlatshwayo and Zombodzi Magagula. The four are viewed as being more independent of the king.

One of the four commissioners, who did not want to be named, said they believed the make-up of the commission and the limits on debate and political activity meant the "Constitutional Review Commission is not capable of delivery in accordance with the will of the people." He said most commissioners represented the status quo and did not want the system to change. They met the king every week — not to report on progress made but to consult him on every point.

"There is great 'competition' and squabbling among the members who all wish to be seen to be pleasing His Majesty. I have no option but to resign. The process will not deliver what the people want, and I do not want to lend my name to that."

Mario Masuku, president of the banned People's United Democratic Movement, resigned from the commission in January saying: "The commission is an instrument of deception, delaying tactics and tokenism."

Condemnation

The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions vice-president Themba Mabhi is also a commissioner despite the federation's condemnation of the commission. Mabhi was one of the union leaders arrested by the government during the month-long strike in January.

The government has estimated the constitution review process will cost R20m and has appealed to the international community for financial assistance. Taiwan has pledged R2.3m and the UK R1m, all other countries have only offered advice.

Last week King Mswati was asked about problems with the commission, but said it would not be dissolved. He was satisfied progress had been made.
Swaziland prepares for cuts in customs income

Jari Matsibula
and Banele Grindza

Mbabane — Swaziland revealed a new tax bill this week aimed at broadening the kingdom’s tax base and boosting annual government revenue by at least 36 percent in preparation for the possible phasing out of Southern African Customs Union receipts.

Customs receipts account for 83 percent of revenue in Swaziland’s budget, and is the mainstay of the kingdom’s economy.

The new tax regime, which comes into effect on July 1, introduces a self-assessment scheme under which Swazi taxpayers will be responsible for their own tax liability — shifting the burden of tax assessment from the tax collector to the taxpayer.

The bill, which goes to parliament tomorrow, is part of a clutch of public-sector reforms to overhaul the administration and arrest economic deterioration.

The government budget, has spiralled from a generous surplus position of R51 million in 1992/3 to a deficit of R136 million in 1996/7 and is expected to worsen to R151 million in 1997/8.

In addition, the cost of globalisation and GATT may remove or significantly reduce revenues from customs, prompting the Swaziland government to initiate its Economic and Social Reform Agenda (Sera).

Key tenets of the programme incorporate initiatives to encourage economic growth, revenue diversification and expenditure controls.

The strategy for meeting these challenges is touted as a promotion of sound macro-economic management and the improvement of the efficiency of the public sector through reforming the public service, reforming government-owned companies, improving delivery of infrastructure services and improving administrative procedures.

Seventy-five percent of Swaziland’s expenditure is for recurrent spending, 46 percent of that is for personnel costs, a level dangerously close to the 45 percent IMF red line for mandatory structural adjustment.

Sibusiso Dlamini, the prime minister who inherited a decaying administration when he assumed his post last August, stressed this week that he was committed to containing public spending and to reforms.– African Eye News Service

Swazi king lets Taiwanese miner dig in nature reserve

Banele Grindza
and Jari Matsibula

Mbabane — The Swaziland Minerals Committee has granted a five-year mining lease to Taiwanese company Michael Lee Enterprise to prospect and mine ornamental chert, a green stone used for making floor tiles and jewellery.

The licence, signed on Tuesday, is the first in two years and will allow the Taiwanese to prospect and mine the mineral in a proclaimed nature reserve at Malolotsha.

Mining licences are normally only granted grudgingly by the Swaziland Minerals Committee, which is appointed by King Mswati III and reports directly to him.

– Gwesa Dlamini, the mining committee chairman, paid tribute to the 28-year-old monarch, saying the licence was a direct result of an investment tour of the Far East during which Mswati invited Taiwanese investors to the Kingdom and signed a protocol for investment with the increasingly isolated Republic.

Chert, which is believed to be plentiful in the protected nature reserve Malolotsha on the Western Mountains in a belt bordering South Africa up to the Bulumbu area near the Havelock asbestos mine area, has up to now been mined by bootleg operators from Swaziland and South Africa.

The Taiwanese company will undertake a two-phase development to prospect the area and identify “ideal” mining sites.

In a subsequent phase, they will establish a factory for processing the product before export.

“This will in turn provide training opportunities and employment as well as earn vital foreign exchange for the country” Dlamini said at the signing ceremony.

Michael Lee, who signed on behalf of his company, said the operation would immediately employ between 50 and 100 people, with more jobs coming available as the mine started operating.

He said he had been working on feasibility studies for the project since Mswati visited Taiwan in 1995.

There are only two active mines in Swaziland at the moment. — African Eye News Service
Whitehall firm on new Swazi dispensation

Mbaban – The new British government has reaffirmed its support for Swaziland's controversial Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) which is charged with finding a way to introduce democratic reforms in the autocratic kingdom.

High commissioner John Doble said at a reception to celebrate the queen's birthday this week that he was saddened to learn that some people in Swazi-
Swaziland 'is too small' to draw SA funds

Another SA institution was not aware the exchange existed, and broker SBC Warburg said it was "far too small" to draw interest.

At the end of May, the Swazi Stock Market index had risen 15.5% to 222.85 from the end of last year, and market cap was up 18.6%. Turnover peaked last year at R10.9bn — meagre compared with the JSE's average daily R800m traded.

But more patient investors might take heart in future developments: an insurance and pensions bill before parliament proposes Swazi pension funds be required to invest at least 15% of their capital domestically, which would improve liquidity.

Swaziland Stockbrokers CEO Andrew McGuire says the cabinet is due to debate "a specific policy for future privatisation," which would result in additional listings.

On Friday, the JSE's all gold index ended a further 3.2% or 34 points weaker at 1 027, bringing its erosion for the week to 10.5% or 121 points. The industrial index, added 73 points to 8 511.5, while financials put on 1% or 99 points to a new record high of 9 891. The all share index picked up 28 points to 7 294 at the weekend, although it faltered a net 59 points over the course of last week.

THE Swaziland Stock Market, like many of its African peers, has undergone rapid growth since its birth in 1990, and is expected to gain sharply from the government's plans for privatisation and other proposed legislation. However, in contrast to bigger and more diversified exchanges, Swaziland is unlikely to benefit from SA funds heading overseas on July 1.

Firstly, SA institutions' increased allowance from July of 2% of net cash flows into Southern African Development Community countries is irrelevant when it comes to the Swazi exchange, as Swaziland is part of the common monetary area and unhindered by SA exchange controls.

Secondly and more to the point, local investors say the stock market is "too small". Furthermore, its six listed shares overlap with companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE).

Lonrho Sugar Corporation, which makes up about 65% of the Swazi exchange's R2.65bn market capitalisation, is dual-listed on the JSE, as is Masterfridge.

Standard Chartered Bank Swaziland is a subsidiary of JSE-listed Standard Bank. The only "pure" Swazi listed companies are the Royal Swaziland Sugar Corpora-

tion, Swazispa Holdings and Swaziland Growth Properties, now under suspension. SA's Illovo Sugar plans to list its subsidiary.

"It is very much a good, agricultural-based economy, but there's nothing that really attracts one in terms of industries that we don't have here," said the chief investment officer at a major SA financial institution.
S.A. should stop aid to Swazi sugar producers
Stop punishing Swazis, urges SA sugar chief

SHIRLEY JONES

Durban — The South African Sugar Mills' Association called yesterday for the re-establishment of an equitable trading partnership between the Swazi and South African sugar industries.

Speaking at the organisation's annual general meeting, Don MacLeod, its outgoing chairman, said it was time for South Africa to reinstate the use of facilities such as the export terminal and training and research, which had been withdrawn to punish Swazi producers who sold into the closed South African market.

"Neither country benefits from this standoff, and it is important that facilities are reinstated in return for an acceptance that unfettered access for existing and future expansions in (Swazi) production cannot be allowed while a distorted world market exists."

"The achievement of an equitable trading agreement — through the assistance of the government, if necessary — is important to enable the two customs union producers to promote a sugar protocol within the Southern African Development Community," he said.

MacLeod said in light of the volatility of the world sugar market, the long-term survival of the South African industry depended on a secure domestic market.
Swaziland's community police plan turns sour

Mbabane - The formation of Swaziland community police in the Dvokudweni area in northern Swaziland to assist police curb crime and violence has backfired on those it was intended to serve.

Residents in the five chiefdoms of Dvokudweni have appealed, through their chiefs, to the regional authorities for protection from the community police whom they elected only last month.

Allegations by the chiefs and their subjects splashed across the front page of The Times of Swaziland tell of beatings, torture, confiscation and slaughter of cattle, illegal road blocks and immoral behaviour among male and female community police.

Dvokudweni headman Shiyanakonuza Falhooze, has confirmed that the chiefs have called on the Swaziland police to take action against community police who abuse their authority.

Swaziland police public relations officer, Superintendent Khensui Ndwovu, has confirmed that seven of the community policemen have been arrested and charged with assault.

He said he was shocked but remained confident that the scheme, aimed at encouraging communities to co-operate with the police in combating crime, could work.

It was, however, clear that community police had to be more carefully selected and thoroughly briefed by their chiefs and the Swaziland police regarding the limits of their authority. Their role, said Ndwovu, was to identify and hand criminals over to the police. — Star Foreign Service.
Hong Kong invests in Swaziland

Banele Ginindza

MBABANE — International Investments, a Hong Kong-based manufacturing and assembling company, has pledged to invest R60m before the end of the year on four assembling operations in Swaziland.

The new operations will assemble watches, television sets, air conditioners and enamel cutlery sets. It has also pledged investments in the textile industry, but did not disclose details.

The leader of a company delegation in Swaziland last week, Frank Yiu, said about 2 000 jobs — ranging from managerial posts to menial tasks — would be created.

He said the assembled products would be exported to the Far East.

The investment plans are at an advanced stage after the completion of a feasibility study which the company commissioned through a Swazi consultancy.

Technicians who accompanied the delegation will return in two weeks for further discussions on the planned investment.

Last week the delegation inspected possible sites and identified two plots at the newly rehabilitated Matsapha Industrial Park.

Yiu said the company was waiting for the go-ahead from Swaziland and had packed its machinery for shipping.

The delegation met officials from the enterprise and employment ministry, and the Swaziland Industrial Development Company, which is assisting it.
Swaziland approves Eskom power lines

Mbabane — The Swaziland government has approved, in principle, the construction of one of two proposed 400 kilovolt Eskom power lines through the country to supply Gencor's Mozal aluminium smelter in Maputo.

The $150 million Mozal smelter plant will require roughly 900 megawatts of power to operate at full capacity and would be forced to rely on South African-supplied power, Swaziland's Electricity Board (SEB) officials said.

"To benefit from the Mozal project, SEB will need to build a 132 to 400 kilovolt stepdown substation, so as to redistribute the energy within the country," the government stated last week.

SEB officials also stressed that the Swaziland government was studying the possibility of sourcing more power from its binalional Maguga Dam project with South Africa. — African Eye News Service
Swazi crop could hurt SA farmers

Mbabane — Swaziland's expected bumper vegetable harvest this season could hurt Mpumalanga farmers who have traditionally supplied a significant portion of the kingdom's vegetable markets, analysts said this week.

The bumper season in Swaziland has been attributed to the unusually cold, wet winter which cut pesticide and irrigation costs, and a drive to encourage small farmers to begin farming vegetables commercially.

Swaziland's National Agriculture Marketing Board (Namboard) said yesterday it had registered an increase in the quantity of fresh vegetables brought in by local farmers.

Crammer Dlamini, a Namboard official, attributed the increase to a new cash up-front payment system the board adopted earlier this year.

He said if Swaziland harvested enough vegetables for the local market, imports from South Africa would be minimised. "We only import ... if local demand cannot be met; otherwise local produce is given priority," he said. — African Eye News Service
GDP forecast hit by internal turbulence

Labour and political unrest had shaved 1 percentage point off Swaziland's GDP growth forecast of between 5.5 percent and 4 percent for this year, a Standard Bank economic analysis paper entitled "Facing tough challenges" said this week.

The unrest and resulting strikes, which slowed down new irrigation projects, have hit Swaziland's sugar industry hardest. The industry is the kingdom's biggest foreign exchange earner and one of its largest employers. "The major impact, though, has been the international blow to business confidence in the kingdom - something that is not that easily regained," the document said.

Painting a bleak prospect for Swaziland's general economic performance during the rest of the year, the study also said large industries such as sugar, wood and pulp were not "sending out particularly bright signals." Although abundant rain has boosted water supplies in the sugar sector, the recurrent labour problems and cooler-than-normal weather were likely to lead to a fall in production this season, the report warned. — African Eye News Service, Mbabane
Commission secretary quits (312)

Alana Armstrong

MBABANE — Swaziland’s constitutional review commission secretary has become the third member to resign from the body this week.

Nkonzo Hlatshwayo resigned on Tuesday, a day after the commission’s deputy chairman, Jerry Gule, and member Mthawu. Maxiyi announced they were leaving the body designed to lead Swaziland back to constitutional rule.

The commission was appointed by King Mswati last August, after protests against emergency rule. Some commission members knew they had been appointed only when they saw their names in the local media, and opposition groups have called for an elected body.
SA casino resorts threaten Swaziland industry

Ed 10/14

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FRANCE - Swaziland all
Swaziland switches on Eskom project

MBABANE — Swaziland’s cabinet has approved the construction of Eskom’s 400kv power line through Swaziland to feed Gencor’s Mozal aluminium smelter plant in Mozambique.

The decision, confirmed in a statement from Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini’s office on Friday, cancels proposals for two separate 275kv dedicated lines from Eskom to feed the Swaziland power grid. Also cancelled, the statement said, was another proposed 275kv “interconnector” line linking Swaziland with Mozambique’s Cahora Bassa power station.

The 400kv line, intended to be one of two Eskom supply lines for the Mozal project, is intended to serve Swaziland’s power needs for at least 30 years. Projected costs were comparable to building the two smaller lines.

Swaziland would, however, proceed with plans to build its own 400kv feeder line directly into the Cahora Bassa power pool, to ensure it retained access to alternative power sources. — AENS.
Swazi Investment in Sweet Factory Goes Sour
SA, Swaziland among Sloan group targets for investment

MBABANE — SA and Swaziland are two of 13 southern African countries targeted for investment by Sloan Financial Group, the US-based company which launched a R540m New Africa Opportunity Fund recently.

The group claims to be the world’s largest black-owned diversified financial services firm with managed assets of more than R16bn.

The new fund would make privately negotiated equity investments in companies with business activities located in southern Africa, with an emphasis on SA.

The fund managers, New Africa Advisors, said last week that they were looking for investment opportunities ranging between R22.5m and R96m.

The fund managers hoped to provide capital for expansion, management buyouts, non-core asset disposals, privatisation and investment by multinationals. Industry sectors which will be specially targeted include the consumer products and services industries, telecommunications, tourism, health care, financial companies, light manufacturing and construction.

"Most of these sectors are expected to benefit from the emerging black middle-class consumer," the fund managers said.

The fund’s initial R540m had been raised from US investors, including US bank Citicorp and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, a US government agency.

Sloan executive vice-president Justin Beckett said the fund was an important milestone for the group, by further enhancing its African focus.

"The group has been investing in Africa’s securities markets since 1993 and currently manages a listed portfolio of more than $100m," he said.

He said the launch of the fund supported the group’s view that southern Africa offered "very attractive" investment opportunities.

Factors which contributed to the fund’s successful launch included the growth potential of the SA economy, the lifting of international economic sanctions against SA and the effect of increasing world trade in SA and the surrounding region.

The entry and in some cases re-entry of US and other foreign corporations into the SA market and the positive steps taken by the SA authorities in the phasing out of exchange controls were other factors supporting the fund.

The fund was structured as a 10-year partnership, targeting long-term capital for direct investment in the southern African region. To achieve its primary aim of maximising investment returns, it would pursue a proactive investment approach, primarily by buying substantial equity positions in established, unlisted firms.

The fund manager’s investments team had highly qualified individuals with a wide range of managerial, consulting and financial skills. — AENS.
Swaziland probes SA joint venture

By Alesa Armstrong

MBABANE — A commission of inquiry is under way in Swaziland to probe a $60m satellite deal involving Swaziland’s Posts and Telecommunications Corporation, the Swaziland Television Authority and the African Satellite Entertainment Corporation.

The inquiry will focus on why Swazi telecommunications signed a 10-year lease with Intelsat, making itself liable for $60m, when it had no payment guarantees from its customer, African Satellite. This company is a joint venture formed by SA company United Satellite Network and Swaziland Television in November 1994.

Three people have been suspended on full pay: Swaziland Posts and Telecommunications MD Alfred Dlamini; Swaziland Television MD Dan Dlamini; and Richard Shabalala of the tourism and communications ministry. There have been delays and the main witnesses have not yet testified. The inquiry will resume in mid-August.

African Satellite claims that in January 1995 it asked Swazi telecommunications to make inquiries with only Intelsat about leasing a satellite. But Swazi telecommunications then signed the 10-year lease without entering any contract with African Satellite. A contract between the two parties was signed only in May 1995. African Satellite was unable to raise funds and claims to have asked Intelsat to cancel the deal. Swazi telecommunications board members said they were told about these contracts at the end of 1995.

Last year Intelsat cancelled the lease with Swazi telecommunications, passing it on to Telkom. The inquiry has said it will probe Telkom’s role in the matter. But Telkom International MD Steven Lamb said: “We have not been contacted by anyone in Swaziland. Telkom applied through the normal channels to Intelsat for a capacity and I was finally informed we could take over the lease at a cost of $60m.”
Plant creates 1,000 jobs

Sanele Ginindza

MRARANE — Afzinta Motor Corporation (AMC), which launched its operations in Swaziland yesterday, plans to export 85%-90% of the vehicles it will produce to countries that are members of the common market for East and central Africa.

Export director Rajw Wahi told an AMC convention this week that the R160m investment in a plant to assemble vehicles at the Matsapha industrial site involved the creation of 1,000 jobs.

Wahi said an agreement had already been clinched with a distributor for the sale of the first 1,000 Swazi-assembled buses to Kenya and Tanzania. They would be distributed under the AMC brand name.

He said the Swazi economy would be bolstered by the creation of jobs and the export of vehicles.

Wahi said that Swaziland stood to make at least R90,000 in export revenue for every 1,000 vehicles sold.

AMC vehicles Incorporated parts for European, Japanese, Korean and Chinese vehicles and made up a "unique box for African conditions," said a company spokesman. Both left- and right-hand drive vehicles were produced.

AMC has been selling vehicles for the past 17 months in SA through about 22 dealerships with up to 70 trucks and buses a month being assembled at its plant in Middelburg, Gauteng.

So far more than 1,000 vehicles have been sold in SA.
Clothing firms flock to Lesotho

Candi Ratabane Ramainoaene

MASERU — Lesotho has become a popular site for Taiwanese garment manufacturers, 14 of which have set up shop there, in their quest for a competitive location from which to serve world markets.

The 14 firms, which employ about 8,000 workers, constitute more than half of the 23 textile manufacturers in Lesotho.

Lesotho National Development Corporation spokesman Lesa Makholaibie says Taiwanese firms began investing in Lesotho from 1986, and she claims the quality of Lesotho's labour is attractive to investors.

Labour is relatively cheap by SA textile industry standards — at a minimum of $100 a month — but this is still a higher minimum than that set in several other African and Southeast Asian countries.

Makholaibie says the productivity of Lesotho's English-speaking workforce has resulted in low-unit labour costs and "most companies pay above the minimum wage to reward this productivity". The unions, however, argue the Taiwanese firms seldom pay above Lesotho's minimum wage.

Investment incentives are also a factor. The development corporation offers a 15% corporate tax rate with no further withholding taxes or restrictions on the repatriation of profits, as well as training grants of up to 50% of the wage bill during the training period.

It also provides cheaper loan finance for projects which can demonstrate long-term viability. The duration of the loan is usually up to 10 years. In addition, the corporation can guarantee loan finance provided to its clients by other financial institutions.

Despite the fact that Lesotho is landlocked within SA's borders, it has managed to secure quota-free shipments of garments to the North American and European Union markets — the destination of most shipments. The capital Maseru has also been designated as an inland port, and containers are cleared and shipped through Durban without further customs formalities.

Makholaibie declined, "for strategic purposes", to comment on the number of Taiwanese companies which had relocated to Lesotho from SA, particularly after SA's decision to switch diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China.

Swaziland, which still recognises the nationalist island, is also understood to be woeing Taiwanese investors following SA's diplomatic switch.

Makholaibie would say only that Taiwanese investors were arriving in Lesotho from "elsewhere", and some established operations were growing rapidly. She said Taiwanese company United Clothing had expanded its factory space of 4,000m² by 2,000m², thereby creating additional jobs and bringing its total employment to 2300.

A second Taiwanese firm, J&S Fashions, has also expanded its operations recently.

Furthermore, it was announced recently that Singaporean firm Lekin Textiles had invested R21m in Lesotho.

Makholaibie said of the 22 clothing manufacturers in Lesotho, five came from SA.

Tselelo Ramochela, secretary-general of the Lesotho Federation of Democratic Unions, is not impressed by the Taiwanese investors and alleges they have forced the worst industrial relations records in Lesotho.

He said many of themimported Taiwanese and Filipinos to do supervisory jobs instead of training locals. They also kept workers inside the premises for 12-hour stretches, from 7am to 7am, because they "feared that the workers may confer with the trade unionists who operate in the area".

He alleged they paid the lowest salaries and stuck to the minimum wage stipulated in the law. He also claimed they did not observe international environment guidelines, and employees were in danger of contracting fibrosis, a lung disease caused by fibre dust.
Shocking study on street children

Mbabane - Street children are no longer rare in Swazi society, which once prided itself on its traditional extended family systems.

The children are abused, molested, perceived as deviants and regarded with contempt and hostility.

In a study on street children conducted by the Swaziland Association of Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (SACRO), it was found that there were more and more street children in Manzini and Mbabane.

The study finds that street children are often abused. Police spokesman Sabelo Dlamini said that old men sodomised young boys, many of whom became infected with sexually transmitted diseases. He said the children were enticed with money and offered glue to keep them in "high spirits" during the act.

Physical abuse by parents or step-parents are just two reasons the children opt for the streets. "My mother started seeing other men. He moved in with us with his own children, who used to beat me. I left home," says one street child.

Nonhlanhla Hadebe, a timid 7-year-old, says: "The last time I saw my mother and father was when I was very little. I do not know where they are, but I know that they are still alive. At times I sleep without having eaten anything but I cannot complain - to whom, anyway? I only pray to God that one day my parents will come back so we can all be a family again."

Sandile Mamba (14) says he left home because his alcoholic father used to beat him and his mother.

The children see the street as a place to search for a livelihood. Patrick Johnson (17) recalls how he used to beg along the streets and later turned to washing cars. - Star Foreign Service/Africa Information Africa
Challenge to Swazi throne

Emangcamanes claim kingdom belongs to them

By Sello Serepe

The Swaziland kingdom could be thrown into disarray if the leadership of the Emangcamane Swazis carries out their threat to reclaim the Swazi throne.

This grouping is made up of Swazis who are citizens of South Africa.

They are organised under the Emangcamane Swazi National King’s Council (ESNKC), which is mobilising displaced Swazis throughout Southern Africa.

They claim that Swaziland is their land and that they do not recognise the political borders separating the kingdom from South Africa.

ESNKC members say the land was cut off - without Swazi approval - from South Africa around 1840 by British colonialists.

Swaziland gained independence in 1968.

According to ESNKC spokesman and national organiser Prince Alfred Maseko, the present-day Swazi monarchy are impostors: “They are amaNgwane clan refugees - mostly Dlamini – who immigrated to Swaziland between 1800 and 1820 from Mozambique via Natal.

“They were allowed to settle in the kingdom by King Khabangobe on humanitarian grounds.”

The ESNKC, which operates from South African soil, claims it also has members and supporters in Swaziland, though they are keeping a low profile because they fear the actions of King Mswati III.

The Emangcamanes carry surnames such as Bhembe, Buhali, Dube, Fakudze, Gomane, Hloghe, Jeje, Kunene, LuDlule, Maseko, Mahlobo, Maphanga, Ngwenya, Sihuma, Twula, Vilane, Xaba and Zulu (Mbayaana not Mageba).

According to Maseko, the country was named Swaziland by the late King Maphanga Maseko I around 1750.

“Mswati was named after that territory and not the other way round, as distorters are saying,” he said.

He pointed out that the Emangcamanes regard the current monarchy as “illegitimate”.

“Our kings, chiefs, indunas and the nation at large were persecuted and driven out of their land by the amaNgwane.

“Our last leader in Swaziland, King Sidinga I, was forced into exile in the Free State in 1840, where he died in 1902.”

He said over the years efforts by the Emangcamanes to reclaim their land and throne failed to yield any results as the struggle was waged “quietly and diplomatically”.

“We now invite clan members to join the movement (ESNKC) to pursue this struggle. Our leaders may have been killed over the years but our nation has continued to grow,” he said.

Emangcamanes also want Swaziland to be reincorporated into South Africa as they do not recognise borders which, they allege, were agreed to by British settlers and the Dlaminis.

They also claim that their territory originally covered parts of present-day Gauteng and Mpumalanga.

Other aims of the ESNKC are:

- To seek reparation for the alleged theft of their cattle, throne, land and minerals in 1840; and

- To stimulate debate about the Dlaminis, whose authority the ESNKC charges was imposed on the nation.

Other members of the ESNKC are Jacob Maseko, Dan Maseko, Lucas Sibanyoni, Joe Maseko, Luke Maseko and Cecil Mataza.

The first secretary at the Swaziland High Commission offices in Pretoria, Andrew Sibandze, told Swaziland that his government does not know of the existence of the ESNKC.

However, he acknowledged the existence of the Emangcamane clan, who mostly live in the Bhunya area in the kingdom. He added that his government would investigate the ESNKC.

Although he agreed that the Dlaminis initially came from Tembe in Mozambique, he dismissed the perception that they were refugees who were “illegitimately” clinging to the Swazi throne.

“The Dlaminis overpow-
ESNK national organiser Prince Alfred Masoko at the grave of King Sidinga I in the Free State town of Fouriesburg. The ESNK, which the ESNK says are illegal, Sibandze said his government would not seek "any advice or permission" on the matter from any group outside government. Meanwhile, the Amangcamen are planning a celebration at which Lululeko II, a son of the late King Griffiths Maseko, will be crowned. A date and venue for the coronation will be announced soon.
Stone proves money-earner for Swazi mining industry

Banele Ginindza

MBABANE — Asbestos products and stone quarried for highway and dam construction generated most of the revenue for the Swaziland mining industry in the first half of this year.

"Geological survey and mines department statistics indicate that overall mining sector earnings for this period were R45m. Major revenue earners were the Havelock asbestos mine at Bulabelo, on the northern border, which earned R30,6m after producing 10 940 tons; and the Kwalini Quarry near Mbabane — managed by Rockmovers of SA — which brought in R6m. The government owns most of Havelock.

Kwalini quarry saw increased earnings as a result of constant demand at construction sites, particularly at projects like the multimillion-rand rehabilitation of the Mbabane-Manzini highway, and the Maguga Dam. Stone previously was a low contributor to the kingdom's overall mine earnings.

Swaziland's mining sector had earnings of about R50,8m last year, roughly the same as in 1996.

Overall mining results in the first half of this year have been depressed by the closure in December last year of the Drokolwako diamond mine in central Swaziland. This was owned jointly by Swaziland's investment house, Tshim Vari Ngwane, and the Trans-Hex Group of SA. Havelock has been involved in a recent bid to reopen the Drokolwako mine, and has suggested that it can earn extra income by serving as a tourist attraction, or make low-cost bricks.

However, at the time of the diamond mine's closure, Tshim Vari Ngwane GM Ndimiso Mamba said its high capital requirements and uncertain deposits made it risky to pump in more funds. "We are to explore what could be done with the infrastructure," he said.

Molema colliery, owned by US company Koch, was also threatened with closure last year. However, it made R2,5m after-tax profit this year, thanks to an injection of funds by Koch which alleviated cash flow problems.

"Production and revenue earnings at Maloma colliery were sustained but did not live up to expectations because of poor ground conditions and dyke intrusions," says a report compiled by then seconded government mining engineer Clarence Russell.

Total coal production of 88 932 tons accounted for earnings of R2,59m in the first two quarters of this year, with Emalwati Colliery in Mpaka providing a small balance.

This year the authorities awarded Taiwanese firm Michael Lee Enterprises a licence to mine chert, a green stone used in ornaments and jewellery, at the Malolotja Game Reserve, about 20km north of Mbabane. Michael Lee Enterprises is awaiting also ratification of its application for a licence to mine ventilaite, while G&W Base Metals has applied to mine pyrophyllite.

Lomati Exploration, a JCI subsidiary, has a prospecting licence for the old Forbes Reef gold mine at Pigg's Peak, 60km north of Mbabane.
Swaziland MPs angry at Mandela

Mbabane – The one-party Swaziland parliament has bitterly attacked President Mandela, chairman of the SA Development Community, for allegedly meddling in Swaziland’s internal affairs.

However, Mr Mandela’s attack on traditionalist leaders who deny real democracy to their countries — widely interpreted as a reference to Swaziland’s monarchy — has also been praised by commentators. The attack yesterday was in support of King Mswati who earlier criticised Mr Mandela. — Foreign Service
Swazis accuse Mandela of meddling in their affairs

Mbabane - Swaziland parliamentarians have accused President Mandela of interfering in the kingdom's internal affairs.

They have also asked why Swaziland remains a member of the Southern African Development Community when Mr. Mandela, the SADC chairman, had insulted member nations' traditions and cultures.

The Swazi MPs were referring to Mr. Mandela's criticism of the traditional political systems of some SADC member states in his speech to the organisation's summit, held in Malawi earlier this week.

Political parties are banned in Swaziland. The kingdom's government runs on the "Tinkondwa" (constituencies) system.

Economic Planning Minister Albert Shabangu told MPs that Swaziland had benefited from more than R55-million in aid from the SADC. "The funds have been provided to Swaziland under the SADC/EU (European Union) regional development programme as agreed in Lome Conventions 2, 3 and 4," the minister said in reply to a question. - Sapa
MBABANE – The southern African kingdom of Swaziland has been slow to adapt to the democratic changes in neighbouring countries, with King Mswati III hiding behind a blanket of culture and tradition.

The king has blocked reform proposals, confident that his citizens would be unwilling to change the non-party traditional system of government (Tinkhundla).

But there has been growing political and industrial tension, with the opposition stepping up the pressure and criticising the new constitution as inadequate.

The constitutional review process, said to be the barometer to determine the kingdom’s political way forward, is fizzling in an atmosphere of political confusion and disagreement.

Swazis remain polarised in two seemingly irreconcilable factions regarding the constitution.

Pro-democracy groups want the dissolution of the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) – consisting of chiefs, members of the royal family and those loyal to the monarch.

They were handpicked by Mswati in July 1986 – and the unbanning of political parties by repealing the King’s Proclamation Act of April 12, 1973.

**Political reform**

But traditionalists, who form the traditional government, want a continuation of the *status quo*.

The Review Commission is expected to complete the task of drafting Swaziland’s “unique” constitution next July to pave the way for general elections set for October 1998.

The contrast in views between the *status quo* and pro-democracy groups, including the People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudemo) and the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) which have been vocal for political reform, culminated in the withdrawal of their executive members from the CRC.

Pudemo president Mario Masuku resigned from the commission, while the SFTU suspended its executive member, Themba Moibi, from the organisation for refusing to withdraw from the CRC as resolved.

Another big blow was the recent resignation of three potential opposition members, Jeremiah Gola, leader of the Institute for Democracy and Leadership; Mshana Maziya, lawyer and deputy executive director of the Federation of Swaziland Employers; and Nkono Hlatshwayo, a constitutional law lecturer at the University of Swaziland and CRC secretary.

But Mswati, who was unimpressed by the CRC jigsaw puzzle, told a press conference that personal differences between CRC members, which led to the resignations, was not a legitimate reason for him to dissolve the commission.

**Nonparty system**

He instead called on the nation, which had already passed a vote of no confidence in the CRC, not to give up early, saying that he was satisfied with the process.

He also raised the possibility that he may dissolve the CRC and launch a new constitutional process.

The CRC was allocated a staggering 4.25 million dollars ($19.85m), which included donor funds from various international states, to facilitate the constitutional process.

Already the commission has spent almost 213,000 dollars ($985,000) to buy a fleet of luxury motor vehicles.

Pudemo has planned countrywide political rallies from the end of August to denounce the CRC and conscientise people in readiness for political reform.

Already the party has written to Mswati demanding political reform and saying why they had decided to pull out their leader, Mario Masuku.

According to Masuku, Pudemo is at present soliciting both regional and international support to isolate Swaziland in a bid to step up political pressure on the rulers.

The wrath of Pudemo was felt by the CRC when the political upheavals at the constituencies were marked by toppling and the chanting of political slogans, calling for the immediate dissolution of the CRC. – Sapa-DPA.
Mandela’s ‘democracy’ remarks anger Swazis

Mbabane – President Nelson Mandela’s remarks on democracy at the recent South African Development Community (SADC) summit have sparked protests among conservative politicians in Swaziland, while King Mswati III slammed pro-democracy groups.

Addressing the SADC heads of state summit in Blantyre, Malawi, President Mandela called on traditional leaders to bring about meaningful democratic reforms in their countries.

In Swaziland angry parliamentarians responded by slamming the SADC heads of state, and especially President Mandela, for meddling in the political affairs of the tiny kingdom.

Mgabhi Dlamini, a diehard conservative MP, said the SADC chairman seemed to have an undeclared political interest in the kingdom.

“The SADC chairmanship is interfering with the political affairs of our country. This is really disturbing me. Perhaps he thinks that Swaziland is part of South Africa,” he said.

The parliamentarians asked whether Mandela had a mandate to interfere in the internal affairs of a country and if the organisation respected the unique culture of member states and their leaders.

“Does it mean that democracy in all SADC member states should be universal?” asked MP Patson Khumalo.

Meanwhile, secretary-general of the Human Rights Association of Swaziland (Humaras), Dr Joshua Mzizi thanked Mandela for his “good advice”.

He urged Mswati to listen with an open mind to the SADC heads of state, saying it was not for the king to prescribe to the people the way forward to democracy.

“Swazi democracy is meaningless if it does not mark time with regional, and indeed international democracy as espoused by all freedom-loving nations and enshrined in international charters and conventions,” said Mzizi. – Star Foreign Service
Journalists denounce new law to restrict press freedom

The bill, which is expected to become law, will introduce a new framework for the protection of journalism, including the establishment of a new National Council for the Protection of Journalists, and the creation of a new regulation to ensure the independence of the press.

The bill is seen as a significant step forward in the fight against journalist harassment and violence, and it will be implemented in conjunction with the establishment of a new National Council for the Protection of Journalists, which will be responsible for implementing the new framework.

The council, which will be composed of representatives from the media, the government, and civil society, will have the power to investigate complaints of journalist harassment and violence, and to take appropriate action to ensure the independence of the press.

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Swazi beef processor in battle for supplies

Banele Ginindza

MBABANE — Swaziland Meat Industries, the sole processor of Swaziland’s 3,363-ton beef quota for the European Union (EU), is battling to procure supplies while the Swazi government monitors reports of foot-and-mouth disease.

A shortage of supplies has been exacerbated by the closure of 31 dipping tanks after some buffalo in the kingdom’s Mkhaya Game Reserve tested positive for the PMDSAT virus.

Swaziland Meat Industries — which has never been able to fulfil its EU quota because traditional farmers are reluctant to part with stock — has been unable to buy cattle from blacklisted areas since the red alert was declared.

GM Jon Williams said that if the clinical examinations conducted by the agriculture and co-operatives ministry were not completed soon, the company would face big problems. However, he would not disclose to what extent business had been affected or outline alternative measures that the company was considering.

The disease, which last broke out in Swaziland 28 years ago, had been under control until two buffalo migrated into the Mkhaya Game Reserve about two weeks ago. The buffalo have since been destroyed.

Meanwhile, beef exports and efforts to export cattle to Mozambique will not be affected by reports of the disease. Swazi Veterinary Services director Robert Twala said the incidence of the disease was limited and could not be termed an outbreak. The ministry, which put a freeze on beef activities around Mkhaya Nature Reserve, is continuing to monitor animals in the area.

The problem is not yet expected to jeopardise arrangements to replenish Mozambican cattle stocks which were depleted by the 16-year civil war.

Twala said market confidence had not been lost because prompt action had been taken to control the disease. Swaziland had raised the alarm and informed bodies such as the World Organisation for Animal Health as soon as reports had been received.
Kuwait interested in Swazi bank

Banele Ginindza

MBABANE — Kuwait has indicated a strong interest in buying a 25% shareholding in the Swaziland Savings and Development Bank which is being restructured by the Belgium-based Amesc, a wing of the United Nations Development Programme.

The Swazi government is preparing a business plan for the sale of a 25% shareholding in the bank.

Finance Minister Thembu Masuku told parliament the Swazi government would retain a 49% shareholding while the public would be able to buy 26%.

Masuku said Kuwait was the first international partner that had shown an interest in pumping capital into the Swaziland Savings and Development Bank, which has reported huge losses in recent years.

The losses have been largely attributable to uncommercial practices, such as granting loans to politicians, members of the Royal family and high ranking officials.

"We do not intend selling the entire bank, it belongs to the Swazis and serves their interests," Masuku said. "We will be selling shares to Swazis in our bid to make the bank profitable."

The proposed restructuring will also require the expansion of the bank's board of directors.

The savings and development bank was in the news recently when a commission began investigating its hardline debt-recovery tactics, which had been dubbed the "grab-a-cow campaign" by the local media.

Farmers told the commission that while high-profile debtors, like politicians, owed large sums to the bank, smaller players like themselves had been the target of the bank's campaign. They alleged they had been shot at, their cooking utensils confiscated, and that property valued at millions of emalangeni had been confiscated.

Masuku said Kuwait had pledged to support the bank, but that high-level talks were yet to begin. "I will not delve into the specifics of that matter now... but you must be informed that we are working on a policy and business plan which will guide us in this venture," he said.

Swazi organisations invited to buy shareholdings in the new-look bank include empowerment groups like the Vuvulane Irrigation Scheme which is made up of small-scale sugar growers.

The bank was heavily subsidised by government in the past, largely because many loans to politicians went unpaid. At the start of the current financial year, the bank asked for 33-million emalangeni to bail it out of trouble.
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS Plan to save Swazi Bank doesn’t please everyone

‘Born again’ bank splits opinion

TOM HOLLOWAY

Mbabane — The Swazi government plans to create a “born again” people’s bank out of the Swaziland Development and Savings Bank (Swazi Bank) in a bid to prevent the bank’s collapse.

Swazi Bank is struggling under unpaid, non-performing loans of about R200 million.

The government-owned bank was established in 1958 specifically to assist small farmers who were unable to obtain loans, as they did not have the collateral demanded by commercial banks.

But the bank’s low interest rate loan scheme was allegedly abused by influential Swazi businessmen and some members of royalty, who received millions of rands in irregular loans at the expense of small farmers. The small farmers, who required loans of just a few thousand rands, were allegedly refused loans on the grounds that the bank had insufficient funds.

The bank was declared technically insolvent by an independent firm of auditors two years ago, prompting the state to remove the managing director and hand the operations of the ailing bank over to the Swaziland Central Bank, pending a decision on the future of Swazi Bank.

After pumping some R20 million into a study for options for the bank, the government has decided on the bank’s future.

However, more than a few eyebrows were raised when Themba Masuku, the finance minister, recently announced the government’s plans for salvaging Swazi Bank.

The government’s restructuring plan for Swazi Bank is to split it into a “good bank” and a “bad bank.”

The non-performing debts will be left with the bad bank, which will remain wholly government-owned. It will operate on a collection-only basis to recover the amounts owed. No new business or deposits will be accepted by the bad bank.

The good bank will be a new legal entity into which managing partners from the private sector, such as other financial institutions, as well as passive investors with small shareholdings, will be introduced. This bank will be run as a commercially viable operation aimed at paying a dividend within five years.

The good bank will incorporate all Swazi Bank’s existing performing loan accounts and savings accounts. As with other financial institutions in the country, it will employ a mix of national and expatriate qualified staff to ensure it has adequate financial expertise and local knowledge to run a viable operation.

The good bank will include a recovery unit which will undertake debt recovery work on behalf of the bad bank on a contractual basis.

Despite an assurance given in parliament by Masuku that no debt forgiveness would be entertained, cynics, including many parliamentarians and the press, have expressed concern about the real motives behind splitting the bank into two units.

These suspicions were summed up this week in a front page editorial in the Times of Swaziland, entitled “Overdrawn, over protected, overdue for justice.” The newspaper said the important question was who would be appointed to run the bad bank effectively to recover the debts, as the government had failed to do so through the Swazi Bank.

It said those owing the bank were still seeing driving luxury cars and owning huge farms, houses and hotels, and asked whether the government would seize the properties of those “fat cats” who owed millions, as it had seized the livestock and equipment of small farmers who had failed to repay loans of a few thousand rands because of prolonged droughts.

The paper said there was no guarantee the powerful debtors would not continue to use their status and influence to intimidate a government-appointed bureaucrat who was responsible for recovering the debts.

In addition, it said there was reason enough to suspect that, by splitting the Swazi Bank and taking the bad bank under its wing, the state hoped the public would eventually forget about the R200 million in bad debts, which then could be written off.

The paper called for Swazi Bank’s “high and mighty debtors” to be stripped of their assets in lieu of the amounts owed, in the same way as commercial banks would treat them. To this end it said the government should set an independent financial body run the debt recovery process.

It said Masuku should meanwhile quickly draft and pilot through parliament a bill aimed at the establishment of a special court to deal with the debt recovery process in the shortest time possible.

Certainly the government coffers could do with the R200 million which, among other things, could substantially reduce its steadily increasing deficit, which is well over R100 million and is predicted to double or even triple over the next year or so.

But as Isaac Shabangu, the former finance minister, once said in an attempt to assure members of parliament who expressed concern about the deficit: “Deficits are really only a matter of simple arithmetic. Many people would agree that to be a good finance minister, one needs to be a good juggling.” — Independent Foreign Service
Swaziland in new taxation move to lure investment

Banele Ginindza

MBABANE — The Swaziland government has tabled a bill introducing new investment incentives in a bid to attract more investment and boost the manufacturing sector in particular.

The Investment Promotion Bill, which has been approved by the cabinet, will lead to a reduction in the corporate tax rate from 37.5% to 30% during the current year. Another 5% decrease will be phased in over the next five years, bringing the rate to 25%.

The current tax holiday for certain new companies is to be scrapped following complaints that it was not applied fairly and that some companies moved their operations out of Swaziland once their five-year tax holiday period had expired.

Tax holidays, will, however, be replaced by a targeted company rate — a reduced tax rate aimed at encouraging the manufacture of specific goods — and a reduced rate for small companies struggling to become established. This means their tax rate will, in cases, fall below 25%.

The bill aims broadly to promote new investment, protect existing investments and facilitate the settlement of investment disputes. It also provides for the establishment of an investment promotion centre, which should provide all necessary information in a "one-stop service" to investors.

Government said earlier that the centre's role would include attracting investment, removing barriers to investment, and advise the enterprise and employment minister on investment policies and suitable incentives.

Labour and business are generally supportive of the bill, but are unsure whether it will improve Swaziland's ability to compete in the region.

Swaziland chamber of commerce and industry executive director Harvey Bird said the chamber supported the concept. However, it was not enough to drop corporate tax rates when many southern African countries already had lower tax rates. "We must demonstrate that we are facilitating new investment in the kingdom," he said.

Federation of Swaziland employers deputy executive director Muhawu Maziya said the new incentives should help Swaziland survive as it opened up to regional competition.

Swaziland federation of trade unions assistant secretary-general Jabu Nxumalo said the manufacturing sector's investment incentives should include easy access for investors to operational land, an export processing zone and effective trade liberalisation. "It is government's responsibility to legislate investor-friendly laws, settle disputes at the point of origin and promote dialogue," he said.

The federation was opposed to corporate tax cuts being carried over to the tax on workers. "The taxes should be such that the small man does not end up paying for the big firms," he said. Any policy had to take account of the social life, welfare and investments of the people, he said.
SWAZILAND - GENERAL -
1998-1999
Swazi doubt on reform

Mbabane – Swaziland’s banned opposition parties said here they were sceptical of a loosening of curbs on political activity announced at the weekend by King Mswati III.

Both the underground People’s United Democratic Movement (Pudemo) and Siye Siyungaba, a political movement masquerading as a cultural organisation, said they would be satisfied only with a return to normal politics.

King Mswati rules by decree and all political activity is banned under a state of emergency declared in 1973 by his father, King Sobhuza.

At the weekend, the monarch encouraged people to share ideas on the constitutional transformation of Swaziland and to feel free to discuss political ideas.

He also called on Swazis to consult among themselves and to make submissions to the Constitutional Review Commission he appointed in July to examine possible reforms in the country’s constitution. – Sapa-APP
Swaziland slashes SA flour imports

By M. W. N. van der Walt

Swaziland has taken the initiative in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) by slashing its flour imports from South Africa. This move has been made as a response to the high prices of flour in Swaziland, which has been attributed to the high cost of imported flour from South Africa.

The Swaziland government has imposed a 15% import duty on flour from South Africa, which has led to a significant reduction in the importation of flour to Swaziland. This measure is expected to reduce the cost of flour in Swaziland and improve the living standards of the Swazi people.

The Swaziland government has also encouraged local flour producers to increase their production to meet the local demand. This has led to an increase in the domestic production of flour, which has contributed to the reduction in the price of flour in Swaziland.

The move to slash flour imports from South Africa has been welcomed by the Swazi people, who are pleased with the government's initiative in reducing the cost of living. The government is expected to continue its efforts to support local producers and reduce the dependency on imports to improve the economy of Swaziland.

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) has expressed its support for the Swaziland government's initiative and has encouraged other member states to follow suit. The SADC member states are expected to discuss the implementation of similar measures to reduce the cost of living in the region.

The move to slash flour imports from South Africa is expected to have a positive impact on the economy of Swaziland and the region as a whole. It is hoped that this measure will encourage other member states to take similar initiatives to reduce the cost of living and improve the economy of the region.
Mill to close for 2 months

MBABANE — Usuthu Pulp at Bhunya in western Swaziland will close for two months from February 1 following a sharp decline in overseas orders.

The Sappi-operated company will also lay off more than 2,000 workers until its market in southeast Asia has improved.

MD Andy Goodwin said unsold stocks of pulp at the mill now amounted to E70m, the Swazi Observer newspaper reported.

Goodwin said it was hoped that when the company reopened on March 20, the excess stocks would have been sold and the international market conditions improved.

Usuthu expressed uncertainty about its future following periodic industrial action organised by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions. Loss of production because of the action had cost the company hundreds of millions of rands. — Saga.
Swaziland millers move to increase production

Banole Gindza 02/2/98

MBABANE — Swaziland's three sugar millers have committed at least R33m towards increasing overall production by 150,000 tons over five years.

The Royal Swaziland Sugar Corporation (RSSC), Mahune Sugar Company and Ubombo Ranches plan to increase total production capacity from 500,000 tons to 650,000 tons by 2003. The expansion will range from increasing field hectares to milling.

This is in line with government and private sector initiatives to increase small sugarcane growers' participation in the industry which was deregulated last year.

All the millers are committed, in varying levels, to assisting small-scale growers, some of whom are on state land.

Mahune has set up a dedicated department to assist with feasibility studies, planning, administrative and technical know-how to consolidate small growers' development.

RSSC, popularly known as Simunye, which has extended also assistance to small growers, plans to make land available to them.

Ubombo works closely with farmers in Siphofaneni and Mphoemb who are growing cane on 600ha.
Old and new medal under a King’s rule
Tourists pass by Swaziland

SWAZILAND is losing out on southern Africa’s regional tourism boom, with increasing numbers of tourists skipping the country in favour of South Africa’s casinos, beaches and game reserves.

The decrease in tourists started in 1994 and is expected to escalate as increasing numbers of casino resorts open in neighbouring South African provinces, according to the Integrated Tourism Report for eastern Swaziland released yesterday.

Drafted on behalf of the Lusombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI), the report also notes that the industry has failed to develop any domestic tourism.

The LSDI is Swaziland’s answer to South Africa’s R25 billion Maputo corridor initiative, aimed at linking Gauteng with Mozambique’s Maputo harbour.

Launched to ensure Swaziland is not isolated from planned industrial and infrastructure development along the corridor, the LSDI is designed to link the kingdom with Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique via a network of new highways and rail links.

The tourism report stresses that the end of anti-apartheid boycotts and development of regional casinos in South Africa has effectively robbed Swaziland’s tourism product of its key ingredients.

The country has instead become, the report says, a transit tourism market for package tours travelling between Mpumalanga’s game reserves and beaches in Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal.

Swaziland should therefore design new products to serve these tourists, who spend one day in the country on average.

Despite the overall decline in tourist arrivals, the report also notes that there has been a significant increase in the number of tour buses passing through the Lowveld region of Swaziland. One bus passed through the region per week in 1994 compared to six per day in 1996.

The report suggests a larger proportion of regional tourists currently travel as part of organised tour groups than in the past.

It adds: “Swaziland’s location between major tourist attractions within an expanding regional tourism market suggests that it remains well-positioned to function as a transit destination.” — Sopa.
Swaziland makes plans
to expand sugar output

Mbabane — Swaziland, one of
Africa's largest sugar producers,
hoped to increase annual produc-
tion by 150,000 tons to 650,000 tons
in five years, said Thamba Mas-
suku, the finance minister.

This did not include 4,000
hectares of sugar already being
grown by smaller producers
under an empowerment pro-
grame, he said at the weekend.

Another 14,000 hectares was
planned for small producers in
the lower Lesotho basin, which
was still under feasibility study.
On average 110 tons of sugar
cane were harvested a hectare.

Swaziland's three millers said
they planned to invest 32 million
emalangeni (R37 million) in
increasing sugar production.

Jerry Gosnall, of Ubombo
Ranches, which produces 175,000
tons annually, said the company
hoped to increase capacity to
230,000 tons by the turn of the
century. The Royal Swaziland
Sugar Corporation planned to in-
crease its 165,000 tons to 200,000
by the year 2003, said managing
director Paul Linder. Mkhume
Sugar Company's Brain Glesseck
said output of 170,000 tons would
increase to 280,000 tons once a
factory expansion was completed.

Masuku said a fourth miller
was planned as sugar-growing
expanded to other areas.
Swazis pull out economic stops

Mbabane — The kingdom of Swaziland was restructuring its economy to meet the challenges posed by the economic liberalisation of southern Africa, said Themba Masuku, the finance minister, at the weekend.

Changes included a 25 percent cut in corporate taxes, raising fuel prices and modernising the infrastructure, said Masuku.

South Africa, the economic giant which hogs the kingdom’s borders and dictates its monetary and fiscal policy, is on the verge of sealing crucial trade deals from which Swaziland’s economy cannot escape. About 50 percent of Swaziland’s income is drawn from customs revenue.

By the end of the year, Pretoria hopes to have a trade deal with the European Union and is also preparing to renegotiate the Southern African Customs Union agreement. New regional challenges will also be faced with the World Trade Organisation’s new tariff structures.

Masuku said that the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Swaziland was a member, was also on its way to becoming a free-trade area, forcing the kingdom to become more competitive.

“The short-term impact of all these influences will be negative. But in the long term, it is good because we will then have the competition and are likely to be getting cheaper goods we can afford.

“We will also be selling to those markets which we were unable to penetrate before because of all these controls.”

Masuku said that the Swazi government was about to review its 25-year-old tax system, widen the tax net and reduce corporate taxes by at least 25 percent to lure new investors.

There is already a five-year tax holiday for new investments.

He said that Swaziland’s fuel prices, currently well below those of neighbouring states, should be increased to fund economic changes.

Spending on infrastructure, 25 percent of Swaziland’s R3 billion budget, would be intensified to give better access to new areas for development.

A 40 km highway was being built between the industrial hub Manzini and the capital Mbabane. Improvements were also due in telecommunications while last week bids closed for a cellular phone network.

The government planned to increase electricity supply from South Africa’s utility company Eskom to make local supply more reliable.

Before sanctions were lifted in South Africa, the kingdom was a hub for foreign companies in Africa’s southernmost tip. But since South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994, and new economic trust in neighbouring Mozambique, Swaziland has received little new investment.

The Asian currency crisis has also hit its timber industry, one of the country’s main foreign exchange earners. Ninety percent of its timber is exported to Asia.
Swaziland losing out on the boom in tourism

MBABANE — Swaziland is losing out on southern Africa’s tourism boom, with increasing numbers of tourists skipping the country in favour of SA casinos, beaches and game reserves.

The decrease in tourist arrivals started in 1994 and is expected to escalate as increasing numbers of casino resorts open in neighbouring SA provinces, according to the Integrated Tourism Report for eastern Swaziland released on Monday.

Drafted on behalf of the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative, the report also notes that the industry has failed to develop any domestic tourism, African Eye News Service reports.

The initiative is Swaziland’s answer to SA’s ambitious R26bn Maputo corridor initiative, which aims to link Gauteng with Mozambique’s Maputo harbour.

Launched in response to fears that Swaziland would be isolated from the planned industrial and infrastructure development along the corridor, the initiative is designed to link the kingdom with Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique through a network of new highways and rail links.

The tourism report stresses that the scrapping of anti-apartheid boycotts and the development of regional cascades in SA have effectively robbed Swaziland’s tourism product of its key ingredients.

The country has instead become, the report says, a transit tourism market for package tours travelling between Mpumalanga’s game reserves and beaches in Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal.

Swaziland should therefore design new products aimed at serving these tourists, who spend only one day in the country on average.

Despite the overall decline in tourist arrivals, the report also notes that there has been a significant increase in the number of tour buses passing through the Lowveld region of Swaziland.

Only one bus passed through the region every week in 1994, in comparison to the six buses a day that passed through the region in 1996.

The report also suggests that a larger proportion of regional tourists currently travel as part of organised tour groups than in the past.

It says: “Swaziland’s location between major tourist attractions within an expanding regional tourism market suggests that it remains well positioned to function as a transit destination.” — Sapa.
SA, Swaziland sign a truce to end sugar war

SHIRLEY JONES

Durban — The South African and Swazi sugar industries yesterday signed a truce, ending a feud that has lasted more than three years.

Although no details of the agreement were disclosed, a spokesman for the South African Sugar Association (Sasa) said the accord had been scrutinised by both governments and included a provision for the export of surplus sugar. Don MacLeod, the chairman of Sasa, signed the accord with Peter Hughes, the president of the Swaziland Sugar Association.

MacLeod said in September last year after penultimate negotiations between the two industries that the new agreement would be significantly different from the one that fell away when Swazi export sugar began to leak into South Africa, undermining the local industry's jealously guarded domestic market.

The resulting battle culminated in Sasa barring the Swazi sugar industry from export facilities at the Durban port and training and research facilities.

Sasa said the two governments had encouraged the industries to settle their differences.

"This (agreement) clears the way for the restoration of good relations. This is to the benefit of both industries. It includes access to the Sugar Milling Research Institute, utilisation of the Industrial Training Centre at Mount Edgecombe, and the re-establishment of the Swaziland sugar industry's links with and contribution to the Research and Experiment Station at Mount Edgecombe," the Sasa spokesman said.

The agreement also paves the way for further South African investment in the Swazi sugar industry.
Voluntary sterilisation now an option for Swazis

Voluntary sterilisation has become an option for Swazi couples who do not want more children.

In women, the procedure is tubal ligation and for men, vasectomy.

The Family Life Association, which began offering this service at its Mbabane Clinic in 1985, says the procedure, if well utilised, would contribute significantly towards controlling the country's annual population growth rate of 3.3 percent.

However, according to Marjorie Mavuso, the Association's Research Manager, cultural and religious backgrounds are discouraging people from using the method.

She said by December 1995, only 28 women and five men had undergone the operation. An education programme was launched and since then, another 1,165 adults had undergone the operation, most of them women.

"Between January and December last year, the number of men who were sterilised outnumbered that of women for the first time since 1985," says Mavuso. "We appeal to the people to first get the right information from us before they undergo this operation. We counsel them on the implications of the operation as we believe that a client has a right to be provided with all the information required to make an educated decision."

Francis Bllini of Sigconeni, a mother of nine, opted for tubal ligation in 1985. "I asked my husband to come with me to the hospital when I went to give birth to my last born. We briefly discussed the option and asked him to sign. I had discussed the operation with him many times and all along I wanted to have it done but met with strong objection from him. The argument was that because he was the only child he wanted me to have as many children as possible. Finally he agreed."

AIA
Swazi MPs call for hangman

BY TOM HOLLOWAY
Star Foreign Service
3/14/98

Mbabane - Members of parliament have called on Justice Minister Maweni Simelane to speed up the appointment of a hangman, saying only the immediate hanging of murderers would deter potential killers.

Nine convicted murderers are on death row awaiting the death sentence.

Last week, a heated debate on the justice ministry's budget allocation led to condemnation of Swaziland's unprecedented violent crime, which includes rapes and murders, often committed during armed robberies.

Angry MPs asked Simelane: "How many more people must be murdered before the judicial mechanism already in place is used to stop the scourge?"

One MP said only immediate hanging of murderers would deter potential killers.
Tongaat-Hulett gets Swaziland foothold

Durban — Tongaat-Hulett Sugar, the sugar company had acquired Tambankulu, the largest independent sugar estate in Swaziland, with effect from March 31, Bruce Dunlop, the managing director, said yesterday.

He did not disclose the value of the acquisition.

Dunlop said the move into the Swazi sugar industry was a significant expansion of the company's investment base in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The acquisition would enable the company to broaden its contribution to the SADC sugar sector and provide a base for it to participate in the Swazi sugar industry, he said.

The acquisition comes after the recent signing of a truce between the South African and Swazi sugar industries, which ended a feud lasting for more than three years. The truce paved the way for further South African investment in the Swazi industry.

Dunlop said the move into higher-yielding, low-cost irrigated areas was part of a strategic diversification to decrease Tongaat's exposure to dry land farming and to enhance its geographic profile.

In addition, the Swazi sugar industry had limited exposure to the world market as almost its entire production was sold within the Southern African Customs Union and the European Union, in terms of the Lomé Convention. As a result, sucrose prices were high.

"We have great confidence in the future of the sugar industry in the SADC, and Swaziland is an important sugar player in the SADC community," Dunlop said.

Tambankulu has 3,123 hectares under sugar cane and 540 hectares under citrus. Its cane yields average 110 tons a hectare.

This ranked with yields achieved at the group's Zimbabwean sugar investments, Dunlop said.

In addition, Dunlop said the company intended to increase sugar production from the estate. Tambankulu produces 352,000 tons of cane a year — equal to about 44,000 tons of raw sugar — 10 percent of the total output of the Swazi sugar industry.

Steven Saunders, the chairman of Tongaat-Hulett Sugar, said the earnings base in Tambankulu would make a meaningful financial contribution to the group.
Victory for the media in Swaziland

MBABANE: A Swaziland parliamentary select committee set up last year to examine and make recommendations on a bill to regulate the local media has recommended that the controversial bill be shelved.

The bill was designed to give the government powers to regulate the media and contained tough proposals on qualification conditions for journalists to practise in the country, as well as dire penalties for contravening its 31 clauses.

The parliamentary committee yesterday recommended that a communications and media policy be drafted jointly by the government and all stakeholders to replace the government-drafted bill. This was seen as a victory for media freedom. — Sapa
Swazi housing a costly bone of contention

MBABANE — Despite warnings by the International Monetary Fund to cut public spending, the Swazi government is to spend R18m this year to house public servants.

Accountant-general David Dlamini disclosed that the government received only R2.8m in rentals for existing government housing.

Dlamini said this was because of the failure of the government to update rentals charged to public servants. He said they were paying between R60 and R100 a month for houses which would fetch up to R3 000 a month on the open market.

Many public servants are reported to be subletting rooms in their government houses and using the proceeds to buy their own houses. — Sapu.
Govts attempt to free potential of beautiful region

The breathtaking ecological heritage mingles with the tragedy of poverty-stricken and neglected communities in northern KwaZulu-Natal, eastern Swaziland and southern Mozambique, which has prompted the three governments to co-operate in boosting the economic potential in the region and creating an attractive and stable investment climate.

Yesterday, Mozambique President Joaquim Chissano, Swaziland’s King Mswati and President Nelson Mandela jointly launched the Lubombo spatial development initiative (SDI) — an area encompassing the subtropical plains and coastline that surround the Lubombo mountains — at the annual Tourism Indaba in Durban. A major investment conference will follow later this year.

This development programme, the first ever to involve co-operation at this high level between the three countries, aims to promote economic growth through tourism and agriculture by commercialising many of the region’s game parks and attracting significant local and foreign investment.

SDI project manager (SA) Andrew Zaloumis said that underlying the initiative was the creation of small businesses, meaning that outsiders would form joint ventures with local businesses and communities. The region spans from the Umfolozi River near Richards Bay northwards to the KwaZulu-Natal and the surrounding lowlands, which run north-south through the three countries.

The region has six major inter-linking ecosystems and is internationally renowned for its plant diversity, game reserves and unspoilt coastlines. Zaloumis said this asset mix was well placed to stimulate competitive tourism and agricultural industries.

However, the inadequacy of road infrastructure hindered development. Besides the N2, which links Richards Bay with Swaziland and Mpumalanga, there are only minor and often untarred roads.

Access to Mozambique is restricted to 4x4s because roads are limited to beach sand tracks. The 30km from the border to Ponta Malongane takes nearly an hour, while the 150km to Maputo takes about five hours.

The SA government has begun construction of a R200m road, while the Mozambique government has given its assurance that the upgrade of infrastructure is a priority.

However, SDI co-ordinator (Mozambique) Alhino Mahumane said that just converting to gravel, thereby reducing the travelling time to Maputo to 90 minutes, would cost R40m. This is money the government does not have.

Since the civil war, Mozambique has enjoyed increased investor confidence on the strength of a stable exchange rate. In 1996, gross domestic product growth was 6% and inflation only 16,6% compared to 54% in 1995.

The country’s tourism policy defines strategic zones for development to enhance its feasibility and economic growth. The policy reduces possible conflicts between economic activities and avoids environmental damage.

“This, together with stability, creates a context in which tourism can thrive,” Mahumane said.

In Swaziland, the Tourism Development Agency is still being set up but SDI co-ordinator (Swaziland) Sindi Mabuza said this agency would represent a cross-ministerial partnership with the private sector and be responsible for a national marketing strategy.

Zaloumis said to unlock the region’s economic potential, the three countries committed to spend R4bn annually on tourism up to 2005. The three governments are also committed to spend R1bn annually on tourism up to 2005. The three governments are also committed to spend R1bn annually on tourism up to 2005. The three governments are also committed to spend R1bn annually on tourism up to 2005.
Journalists in row over media awards

MRABANE — Claims of favouritism and corruption have been levelled against a panel of judges who selected prizewinners at the weekend's media awards in Swaziland, it was reported.

A row erupted among Swazi journalists over what many alleged was an unfair and corrupt selection system.

One example was a journalist who was awarded a prize for being last year's best sportswriter.

He later admitted that he did not deserve the prize because he was out of the country for the year on a training course.

Some journalists were so offended by the awards that those working at the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service refused to announce the winners over the radio.

Instead, they tore up the prepared scripts. — Sapa.
Concern over tax on goods crossing Swazi-SA border

James Haff

MBABANE — There is growing unease among Swazi business and government leaders about a proposed SA tax on Swazi goods entering and leaving SA.

Robert Sandis, the director of border management for the SA revenue service, announced that a 14% value-added tax may have to be paid at Swaziland border crossings on all imports and exports. The tax is actually a security against fraud by VAT-dodging SA “exporters” who claim their goods are destined for Swaziland when they in fact never leave SA.

An estimated R600 000 a month in VAT revenue is lost on phoney goods shipments supposedly destined for Lesotho, Mozambique and other countries.

Similarly, some goods leaving Swaziland escape VAT when shippers claim an overseas destination, but then these goods end up in some Gauteng warehouse”, a spokesman for the Swaziland Chamber of Commerce and Industry said.

Janpber Dlamini, public relations officer for Swaziland's customs and excise department, admitted such abuses did occur, “but they are perpetrated by small-scale crooks, never by major industries”.

One Swazi businessman said: “We call the new border payments “baat” instead of a “tax” because the money is to be refunded once a Swazi business proves the legitimacy of a goods shipment at point of destination. But repayment will take we don’t know how many months, and that leaves us with a significant cash-flow problem.”

Swazi government and business leaders hope for a promised meeting with SA customs officials prior to the introduction of the plan sometime this year.

Among the proposals Swazis will suggest to avoid a border tax collection is the presentation of contracts and official documents to confirm the legitimacy of goods shipments.
Swazi currency will stay linked to the rand

James Hall

MBABANE — The governor of the Central Bank of Swaziland, Martin Dlamini, has assured investors that there are no plans to decouple the Swazi currency from the rand, despite the rand’s dramatic depreciation in recent weeks.

SA is Swaziland’s most important trading partner.

Dlamini was reacting to calls from the public and political leaders to delink the Swazi monetary unit, the emalangeni, from the rand in view of the latter’s declining value.

One Swazi MP said during the budget debate that the linking of the unit to the rand left the Swazi economy vulnerable to currency speculators targeting the rand.

Other MPs have complained that the Swazi currency should not be an “innocent bystander” caught up in SA’s currency crisis.

Such populist rhetoric disturbs local economists, who note the wisdom of tying Swaziland’s relatively small economy to the region’s economic powerhouse. Dlamini acknowledged that the most likely effect of the rand’s depreciation would be a rise in the price of commodities. Swaziland imports all its petrol and most of its consumer goods.

However, with a cheaper rand, Swazi products and services will be more competitive internationally.

As to the effect of the currency crisis on Swazi interest rates, Dlamini said the central bank was monitoring market activities in Swaziland and SA to determine its interest rates. Swaziland’s central bank would strive to minimise the interest rate differentials with SA so as to reduce the risk of substantial capital outflows to SA.

Meanwhile, Christof Maletsky reports from Windhoek that the government said on Friday that the price of pump petrol and diesel would increase from Wednesday as a result of the weakening of the rand against the dollar. The Namibian dollar is pegged to the rand.

The mines and energy ministry said leaded petrol would increase 4% while unleaded petrol would go up 5%. The price for diesel would increase 2%.

The ministry said the inflationary effect of fuel prices on the economy had been considered when deciding on the increase and the government would monitor currency market trends and strive to keep domestic pump prices in equilibrium with import parity prices.

A mechanism allowing for quarterly fuel price adjustments had proven a success in this regard, as could be seen from the three consecutive price reductions in the previous three quarters.

Last week the key Namibian banks increased their prime lending rates by between 1.5 and 2.25 percentage points and several local economists forecast price increases in imported goods and general transport costs.
Swazi phone service threatened by cable theft

James Hall

MBABANE — About 20% of Swaziland’s telephone subscribers are without service due to the persistent theft of telephone lines, a matter which has become a thorn in the side of the business community.

The copper wire is melted and ends up as gimmicks aimed at the tourist trade.

Police investigators suspect that factories in Mozambique and SA buy the stolen wire. However, the actual cutting of telephone lines and their transport across the border is thought to be carried out by local Swazis.

Businesses and rural homes are worst affected by the loss of services. In urban areas, phone lines are usually buried underground.

Rural-based industries like the Simunye Sugar Estate, situated near the Mozambican border, are often cut off from corporate offices in Mbabane and the industrial area of Matsapha.

A spokesman for the Swaziland Post & Telecommunications Corporation, Lindiwe Dlamini, put the cost of stolen wire at R1,5m since last year. The effect of the theft was “a loss to Swaziland’s economy”.

It was reported last month that the Japanese government, discouraged by the continuous loss of telephone lines, had withdrawn financial support for a scheme to bring phone service to rural areas.

The introduction of a cellphone service by MTN by the end of the year will not alleviate the crisis.

Cellphones are beyond the financial means of rural Swazis who also live in areas out of range of planned cellphone signal beacons. “A ground-based telephone infrastructure will always be necessary, even with cellphones,” Dlamini said.

No arrests have been made in connection with the thefts, but community police patrols have begun providing leads to the Royal Swazi Police Force.
Locals' accusations of theft hamper geological prospecting

A clash of cultures is inhibiting Swazi mineral exploration, writes James Hall in Mbabane.

THE exploitation of Swaziland's gold and other mineral resources is being inhibited by chiefs and local residents who harass government geologists, claiming the taking of soil samples amounts to theft of the king's diamonds.

The lack of understanding by peasant residents on Swaziland's national land could frustrate the tiny kingdom's efforts to exploit its natural resources. Community cooperation is considered vital for the success of any project within the tightly knit tribal society.

George Magagula, the chief geologist at the ministry of natural resources, leads prospecting teams in the country, said "the people get really upset when they see us digging up soil samples. The land may be only agricultural, or even barren, but because we are known as the 'diamond boys', they shout: 'You tsotso (bandits) are stealing the king's diamonds.'"

The harassment has been particularly acute in the hamlet of Hhelehehe, about 80km south of Swaziland's principal diamond mine at Drokolwako. The ministry of natural resources has high hopes of locating diamond deposits at Hhelehehe.

By custom, an area chief looks after the interests of King Mswati, who "owns" all the nation's natural resources.

Reports of geologists stealing diamonds have dogged the Hhelehehe exploratory mission and brought on the wrath of area chief Mnikwa.

Hearing from geologists themselves that soil samples are sent to SA for analysis, irate locals condemn the practice of "sending the king's wealth to foreigners".

Government geologists take seriously the accusations against them. Swazis are famously loyal to their king and the theft of His Majesty's property is thought to be an unforgivable, even treasonable, offence.

Swaziland's commissioner of mines, Aaron Vilakazi, responded angrily: "We are being insulted through and through by ignorant, chiefs and residents. "All our explorations are being conducted properly."

Vilakazi conceded that an education programme might prove helpful to alert Swazis to the prospecting process, how soil samples are taken and processed.

"These samples are worthless in and of themselves," said a geologist in Magagula's prospecting team. "They are just indicators. But here in Swaziland, where everybody looks after the king's interests, people can get overexcited. Trouble starts when legitimate business enterprises are threatened."

The geologist said: "But if it takes getting hit on the head with some farmer's lingo (krob-stick), we will continue to locate and extract Swazi wealth."
Swazis prepare to celebrate with cellphones, better roads

James Hall

MBABANE — The completion of a highway, the introduction of cellphones and the refurbishment of the national airport are planned to coincide with the 30th anniversary of Swaziland's independence from Britain and King Mswati's 30th birthday on September 6.

The new dual carriageway will connect the kingdom's two largest population centres, Manzini and the capital Mbabane, and run through the traditional capital Lobamba and the Matsapha industrial site. It is expected to cost R400m.

An additional R100m has been budgeted to extend the highway from Mbabane to Oshoek, the border post most heavily used by SA traffic.

— MTN, which secured the award of a R120m tender to establish a cellphone service in Swaziland, will start its service in September. The date has been brought forward from November.

A R2.5m refurbishment of the single-storey terminal building of the nation's only commercial airport began last week. Its completion is a priority for the works and construction ministry.
Mine's closure knocks industry

(312)

James Hall

MBABANE — A decline in mining industry revenues reported by the Central Bank of Swaziland might have been worse had a weaker rand not created favourable foreign exchange rates for exports.

Nevertheless, 1997/98 industry earnings were $90m, down from $94.6m last year's figures.

The main cause of the industry slump was the closure of the Dvokolwako Diamond Mine. The Mpaka Collieries Mine, with an excavation life estimated at 31 years at 165,000 tons of coal extracted a year, also remains closed.

A central bank survey of the mining industry states: "There is hope that the Mpaka coke mine could be reopened soon, as there are serious inquiries from interested investors."

In contrast to the weaker state of the industry, individual mines are doing well. Coal exports rose by a third because of an increase in exports credited to a cheaper emalangeni, the Swazi monetary unit tied to the rand. Asbestos export revenues also improved."
economist growth

Swaziland central bank reports moderate

James Hall
Sappi launches new scheme in Swaziland

James Hall

MBABANE — SA forestry products conglomerate Sappi has expanded its operations in Swaziland with the launch of a R238m pulp digester and a forestry empowerment scheme to bring local farmers into the commercial tree-growing industry.

The pulp digester is Sappi's largest investment yet in its Swaziland subsidiary, Sappi Umzimkulu Pulp Company, and was recently inaugurated by King Mswati. He also launched a plan to bring local farmers into the commercial tree-growing industry for the first time since forestry was introduced in the kingdom 50 years ago. Until recently, Swaziland boasted the world's largest man-made forest to furnish the timber and pulp which is the kingdom's second largest export.

The R43m tall pulp digester will allow Sappi Umzimkulu Pulp to increase its output from 180 000 to 220 000 tons a year. Additional export earnings are potentially R100m annually. “We are dressed up and ready to go,” Sappi chairman Ian Forbes said.

“Unfortunately, the market is not as robust as before.”

About 90% of the company's pulp is sold to southeast Asia, where economic doldrums have reduced orders.

Forbes said Sappi Umzimkulu Pulp was the world's second largest producer of unbleached kraft wood pulp, used to make cement bags, crepe paper and car filter systems. Assisted by low-cost production and a weaker rand, the company seeks industry pre-eminence.

Coinciding with Sappi's investment in its Swaziland subsidiary is a commitment to sponsor the Tiphilise Ngalihlale empowerment project.

The project is similar to an SA scheme which has seen 7 200 private growers in the past 10 years, largely concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal, enter the forestry industry.

Swazi farmers with land which is unproductive, from as small as one acre will receive saplings, capitalisation and a guaranteed market for their timber when the pines reach maturity in 15 to 18 years. In the interim, Sappi will provide cash flow.

King Mswati applauded the initiative, calling the nation's forest "the renewable mines of Swaziland".
Swaziland exploring the cultural tourism market

James Hall

MBABANE — The Swazi government is trying to encourage private investors to support culturally based tourism projects in the kingdom.

At the recent opening of the new Swazi Cultural Village, a replica of a traditional homestead near the Mantenga Falls, Swazi Prime Minister Simangosing Dlamini said the European Union had helped the Swazi government finance the R1m project, perhaps the last of its kind to be realised at public expense.

"One of the weaknesses in our tourism industry has been the failure to integrate private and public sector resources," Dlamini said. He called on the Swazi National Trust Commission, builder of the now tourist attraction, "to examine carefully the potential for partnership with the private sector."

Dedicating the collection of thatched huts and wattle enclosures, where men and women in traditional attire carry out a homestead’s daily activities before visitors, King Mswati III said: "Our culture is unique, and possibly our single most attractive feature to tourists ... but we have been like a country sitting on an untapped oil supply."

Culture

Commission CEO Sinaye Mamba said the trust commission he headed was established to promote Swazi culture, not to make money. Investors were encouraged to set up and run concessions at the commission’s attractions like the Swazi Culture Village and Mlilwane Nature Reserve.

The commission had spent R1m at Mlilwane this year making Swaziland’s prettiest nature reserve more accessible to tourists, Mamba said.

Tourism revenues in the kingdom were up 50% last year against the previous year.

About 416 000 bed nights were sold in 1997/98, up from 400 000 the previous year.

Even more than game parks, it is the traditional life of Africa’s last country to be ruled by a hereditary monarch which fascinates visitors.

Tour operators organise trips to actual traditional Swazi homesteads in the low veld, where tourists can see sangomas healing patients, and call upon a chief.

Darren Rew of Safari Tours notes that Dutch, German and British tourists make up most of Swaziland’s non-African visitors, followed by Americans. "They marvel at the kingdom’s natural beauty, but it is the royal sites and Swazi people they want to see, and how the traditional African life is still vibrant and viable here."
Swaziland fears rise in interest rates may harm economy

MEBANE — The Central Bank of Swaziland has decided not to lift interest rates to keep in tune with SA developments.

Several of SA’s neighbors have raised their rates as a result of SA moves, and economists in Swaziland have divided views on the probable effect of relatively low rates on the kingdom’s economy. Interest rates in Swaziland stand at 19.75% compared to the 23%-24% range in SA.

“Low interest rates in Swaziland may lead to an outflow of capital as investors seek more lucrative returns in SA banks,” frets one bank manager. “Banks may face difficulty meeting their liquidity obligations. This will be complicated by South Africans who may take out loans to take advantage of our lower interest. That would mean more money going out of the country to finance the SA economy, to the detriment of our own economy.”

On the other hand, if the central bank raises rates to match those in SA, Swazi consumers will be spending more to service their loans, with less money available for other things. Swaziland’s fragile economy may then tilt towards recession. The central bank acknowledges such fears, but says it is too early to detect an influx of foreign loan applicants or an exodus of bank depositors’ money to SA.
Swaziland's exchange likely to be upgraded

James Hall
‘Unclean’ Swazi widows denied voting rights

Criminals may vote and even stand for Parliament in Swaziland. But a widow is regarded unfit for such duties, reports AIA.

WIDOWS in Swaziland are not allowed to vote or stand for election to Parliament because they are considered to be unclean.

The marginalisation of widows based on culture continues unchecked, despite nationwide calls for their status to be improved.

During parliamentary elections, widows still officially in mourning, who are allowed before the deaths of their husbands to register for the general elections, are prohibited from voting.

They are not allowed within 500 m of all the royal kraals, which are used as polling stations.

Indigent widows have pointed out that convicted criminals are allowed to vote and even stand for Parliament.

"It’s not fair that because we are in mourning we should be treated as outcasts. We have the right to vote for people we feel can make a difference in our lives as legislators in the House of Parliament," said a widow from the Shiselweni region.

The Establishment of Parliament Order, 1992, in theory allows widows in mourning to vote, stating plainly that "all Swazis above the age of 18 are eligible voters".

Chief Electoral Officer Robert Thwala ignores this, saying that widows in mourning cannot cast a vote or be elected to Parliament.

He says that even if they were elected to Parliament they would not be admitted.

The official mourning period for widows is between two and three years. During that period the women are forbidden from performing specific duties or behaving in certain ways.

For example, they may not perform royal duties or meet royalty.

As a result widows teaching in national schools have been transferred to central schools in order to avoid their rubbing shoulders with royalty. Widows are often victimised by the relatives of their dead husbands, who seize their property.

The Human Rights Association condemns this treatment of women. Its leader, Vumilela Msibi, says: "Widows have a right to vote or to be elected to Parliament like any other citizen."

Maureen Magwaza, of Mahtane, says: "We are living in changing times and should adapt to things which will make us all comfortable."

"I feel the only way that this problem can be dealt with is for women to march to Ludzidzini Royal Residence and lodge a complaint with the Indlovukazi (Queen Mother)."

Most men continue to support traditional practices. Mzimkhulu of Mlndazwe in Luvumisa, Gilbert Ndelo, says: "I see no reason why people should complain that widows cannot stand for parliamentary elections. They will get their chance to be elected after five years."

"Widows cannot stand in front of men and address them on any matter – it is against our culture. We should not do things which will cause our ancestors to turn against us."

The Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) appealed to the nation to respect human rights: "We should respect all citizens and accept that they have a right to be involved in the country’s welfare," said Swagas co-ordinator Shilga Patel. - AIA
Swazi govt given reform deadline

James Hall

MBABANE — The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions has delivered an ultimatum to the government to introduce political and economic reforms.

Swaziland's umbrella labour organisation has given the royally appointed cabinet of Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini until Friday to fulfil a list of demands which includes the suspension of the October 16 general elections, the dissolution of the Constitutional Review Commission, the repeal of a 1973 royal decree which prohibits political parties and the election of an interim government to rule until a "people-driven constitution" is created.

Concomitant with these demands, the federation continues to pursue its "27 Workers' Demands", first raised in 1994 and covering social, labour and political issues such as maternity leave, pension schemes and alleged exploitation of Swazi workers by multinational corporations.

The government says it cannot meet political demands and these will be addressed by the commission. This has led to an impasse, with the federation calling the commission illegitimate.

Enterprise and Employment Minister Majah'enhhaba Dlamini placed newspaper adverts last month saying the government had addressed all of the 27 Workers' Demands except those beyond its power to consider.

The federation distinguishes between addressing demands and meeting them. Federation secretary-general Jan Sithole is touring the nation on "yusela" (greeting) rallies in anticipation of the government's "deliberate failure" to meet Friday's deadline.

A mass workers' meeting has been called on Sunday to consider a response. The government, preoccupied with the October 16 general elections, is unlikely to meet the federation's deadline.
Judges end Swazi death penalty

Bheki Makhubu

Six South African judges, sitting in Swaziland's Appeal Court, have all but eradicated the death sentence as a punishment for murder in the kingdom.

In what is seen by some law practitioners as a spillover of South Africa's abolition of the death sentence, the judges, led by Judge President JH Kotze, have changed the rules on establishing extenuating circumstances.

In parole appeal cases brought by convicts facing the hangman, the judges overturned the sentences to terms of imprisonment on the grounds that the trial judges had erred in the sentencing.

They were unanimous in the decision that the onus of establishing extenuating circumstances no longer lay with the convicted person but was the duty of the court.

In one murder appeal heard by judges RN Leon, JH Steyn and PH Tebbutt, they observed that: "In South Africa it was consistently held, before the death sentence was abolished, that there was an onus resting upon an accused to prove on a balance of probabilities the existence of such [extenuating] circumstances.

"That was based upon a decision by Greenberg JA... with due deference to so distinguished a judge we find ourselves in respectful disagreement."

Swazi lawyers have described the ruling as a milestone. "It is probable that the new approach favoured by our court of appeal is influenced by the abolition of the death penalty in South Africa and an abhorrence of sentencing convicted murderers to death," the Swaziland Law Society reacted in a statement.

"The new approach is likely to cause certain amount of confusion in our courts as to the role of the judge and the extent to which he is duty-bound to call for evidence on extenuating circumstances, and to actively solicit and seek such evidence."

Swaziland's deputy director of public prosecutions, Musa Nsimande, said: "Appeal judges are known for their abhorrence of the death penalty. In fact, my information is that they were very influential in getting the abolition of the death penalty into the South African Constitution."

When the appeals were heard, there were eight convicted murderers on death row in Swaziland. Despite the judges' ruling, the death penalty still remains law in Swaziland.

But this week Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Chief Maweni Simelane said the country had halted its search for a new hangman, or hangwoman, as it had decided not to appoint a full-time executioner.

He said there would not be enough work to justify the cost to the government, and a freelance hangman would be engaged when it was required. More than 200 people, mostly South Africans, applied for the position although it was never advertised.
AFRICA

Bleak outlook as Swazis go to polls

MBABANE — Swaziland goes to the polls on October 19, confronted with a high unemployment rate, massive retrenchment, excessive government spending, high inflation, huge domestic and foreign debt and declining social services.

Since 1990, the Swazi economy has been on a downward trend, manifesting itself in an increasing unemployment rate, which stands above 20% of the total economically active male population and a decline in real incomes.

University of Swaziland lecturer Mandla Masuku says this high unemployment rate and stagnated food production levels are indicative of an economy that is failing to support and sustain the population.

When outgoing Finance Minister Themba Masuku presented his budget speech earlier this year, he announced a national deficit which now stands at about $32m — up from about $7.16bn in 1993.

The deficit represents 4.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and Swazi economists say it poses serious future economic implications.

The economic growth has stagnated at 2.7% a year, way below the population growth estimated at 3.4% a year.

Economic analysts say this means Swaziland is becoming poorer by 0.9% each year.

A possible revenue loss of millions when the sharing formula of the SA Customs Union is effected later this year, will provide more economic challenges.

Swaziland received half of its revenue of more than $17m last year from the union’s common revenue sharing pool.

More than a third of the country’s GDP and about 40% of government revenue comes from union proceeds.

Senior official and financial expert in the finance ministry Dumisani Masilela says Swaziland’s economy was pillared by the share received from the union.

This is not the only revenue reducing issue facing Swaziland. Changes in the SA Development Community trade protocol and relations between SA and the European Union will have adverse effects on its abilities to trade with its neighbours, severely crippling its revenue generating efforts. — Sapa-DPA.

Swaziland’s King Mswati III, left, is escorted by his Malaysian counterpart Tuanku Jaafar during a welcoming ceremony at Parliament Square in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Picture: AP
Troubled Swazi economy faces more revenue losses
Tax deal with Taiwan pays off for business in Swaziland

James Hall

MBABANE — Taipei-based Tatung Textiles will spend a minimum of R40m to open an electrical appliance assembly plant at the Matsapha Industrial Area, the largest new industrial investment at the Matsapha dry port this year. When SA severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan in favour of the People’s Republic of China, an influx of SA-based Taiwanese businesses into Swaziland was expected as Swaziland continued to recognise Taipei. However, new, rather than relocated firms, moved in. According to the Taiwanese embassy, facilitating this was last month’s agreement to end double taxation.

Previously, profits made by Chinese firms from trade and investment in the kingdom were taxed by both authorities. Tax revenues will now be shared by the two governments. The agreement has also seen other Taiwanese ventures in Matsapha, Swaziland, boom. A garment manufacturer which began operations a year ago at Matsapha, Tuntex Textile Swaziland Company, has seen its production quotas go beyond expectations to an estimated 120 000 garments this year. A R30m expansion planned for 2000 has been pushed ahead two years, and by next March, the work force of 400 Swazis will treble to 1 200.
Swazi poll a farce, says trade union leader

A SENIOR Swaziland trade unionist dismissed yesterday his country's parliamentary election as a farce and said his organisation and other opposition groups were urging a boycott of Friday's polls.

"We do not recognise the legitimacy of these elections and have called for a boycott," Jan Sithole, secretary-general of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, said from his office in the Swazi capital Mbabane.

Political parties are banned in the tiny, landlocked kingdom that borders SA and Mozambique and King Mswati III rules the country as an absolute monarch — the last of his kind in sub-Saharan Africa.

In Friday's elections, more than 300 candidates will contest in 55 constituencies, or tinkuhundla centres, in a "first past the post" British-style race.

An additional 10 members of parliament are appointed by the king, who also decides on selection of the cabinet.

"These elections are occurring under a state of emergency (in terms of which political parties are banned. The electorate has no real choice," Sithole said.

"There is no freedom of assembly, bill of rights or freedom of speech. We want a system in which voters can determine their destiny for themselves," he said.

Sithole said the anti-election campaign had already enjoyed success, as only 200,000 of the 397,000 eligible voters had been registered.

He said that — in a twist for a trade union — the union federation was encouraging workers to go to work on Friday, which has been declared a public holiday.

"We have also asked employers not to pay workers overtime on that day as we do not recognise the holiday," Sithole said.

"Instead, we will call for our own national holiday when the king returns from his trip in east Asia and will organise a march to the palace to press our demands," he said.

Some political analysts said the king was in favour of moving to a more open system.

However, they said he had to deal with vested interests, as well as other members of the royal family who were resisting change.

Sithole said while his organisation advocated peaceful change, the patience of the populace was wearing thin.

"Justice delayed can change evolution to revolution ... things cannot go on endlessly," he said.

More than half of the mostly rural country's 650,000 people are below the age of 18.

It has been estimated that the population is growing at a rate of 3,4% a year — a figure well above the rate of eco-

Real incomes are declining and more than 20% of working age males are unemployed.

"If there is no democracy along with an unfair distribution of wealth and growing unemployment and crime ... (this) is a recipe for crisis," Sithole said. — Reuters.
Credibility may be casualty of Swazi election

TOMORROW's parliamentary election may be the only chance for individual Swazis to influence the course of their government, but the outcome's relative unimportance in the overall power structure is exemplified by King Mswati's absence as he tours the Far East for three weeks to drum-up investor interest in his kingdom.

At stake are not only 55 parliamentary seats and an equal number of local council offices, but the monarch's hopes of maintaining a semblance of democracy while he rules under a 1973 decree that bans opposition parties and grants him absolute governing powers.

Mswati confirmed recently that he saw no need for political parties in his kingdom and would not recognise "anyone who came to me saying he represents another Swazi".

With a successful election seen as essential to maintaining the image of a well-run nation, the Chief Electoral Officer, Robert Thwala, was roundly criticised for last month's 11th-hour postponement of the primary elections.

Thwala said an improper number of ballot papers had been printed. Employers who had already given their workers the day off were incensed, as was the public which had been forbidden to hold funerals, weddings and soccer matches or social activities during the voting.

Swazis do not hold funerals on week days and the two weekends taken over by the primary elections and the preceding weekend in which funerals were banned during the nation's combined 30th independence day/king's birthday celebrations meant a month-long period without burials.

Mortuaries reported corpses piling up three-deep.

Once the primary election was held it took the government one week to announce the winners and Thwala has never released voter turnout information, leading to speculation that participation was low.

When the general election was held in 1993, a low voter turnout of 17% did not bother Swaziland's ruling authorities. This year, the combined forces of outlawed political parties and labour organisations are calling for an election boycott.

The traditionalists at King Mswati's palace and the Mbabane government of Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini are pulling out all the stops to induce the electorate to go to the polls.

The deadline for voter registration was extended three times from June 30 to August 31. The government admits 200,000 Swazis, about half of eligible voters, are registered. Independent sources question the figure.

Unwelcome, however, are widows, who are banned from entering royal villages. Many polling venues are set up at the homes of chiefs, which are considered royal places.

A widow in mourning cannot come into proximity with the king because this is considered "bad luck" in traditional culture. Thwala expanded the ban by forbidding widows from entering parliament.

The prohibition has shocked many Swazis and has led to a national debate on the treatment of widows in modern Swazi society.

Swaziland's chiefs, who are all royal appointees, are adamant that their subjects participate in the election, not least because equating refusal with treason and regicide. Husbands have been permitted to register their wives and adult children without their spouses' or children's consent.

In some schools older pupils have been forced to register by their headmasters. Some chiefs have gone so far as to tell their subjects which candidate to support, in violation of the electoral laws as defined in the 1992 Establishment of Parliament Act.

The government is hoping a large voter turn-out will prove its progressive forces such as the Swaziland Democratic Alliance and the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions to be ineffective if their boycott call is ignored.

At a rally at the sugar-growing region of Lobombo, a long-time union federation stronghold, Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Khosa said: "Boycottting the elections will automatically be construed to mean that everyone is happy with the present government and it should continue in office indefinitely."

Some progressives, such as Simon Noge and Dzupameni Dlamini of the Ngwane National Liberation Council, defied the boycott to participate as candidates, reasoning that an effective opposition could be mounted "within the system".

They now face expulsion from their disapproving organisation. Dlamini lost the primary election, Noge won in his district.

Sam Malale of the Swaziland Youth Congress condemns their strategy. "Government cannot be 'changed from within' because institutional it is impervious to change. What is needed is a new system."

Bongani Masuku, congress president, illustrates this point numerically. Tomorrow Swazis will elect 55 MPs who will serve in the House of Assembly. King Mswati appoints 10 additional MPs at his pleasure. The upper house, the Senate, consists of 30 members, 20 of whom are appointed by the king. These 20 then appoint 10 additional senators from the ranks of either elected or appointed MPs.

"The Senate is there to look after royal interests and between the Senate and the royally appointed MPs, the people's elected representatives are outnumbered."

Parliament has never initiated legislation, but approves bills sent to it by cabinet, leading some MPs to complain of being "rubber stamps."

Legislation passed by parliament cannot become law without the king's assent.

Parliament can be dissolved at the king's pleasure and Mswati may rule by decree. On August 13 the king granted himself the power to pass legislation through a personally appointed council of ministers.

Why, then, run for office with little chance of exercising meaningful power? Times of Swaziland News Editor Vusie Ginindza champions the cause of "change through infiltration". Opposition MPs can serve as "gadflies throwing spanners", he says. They can also gain recognition in the press, and overseas as the nucleus of an unofficial opposition party, something the country does not now have.

P.T.O. For Picture
Credibility may be casualty of Swazi election

ANALYSIS
Low turnout in Swazi poll

MBABANE: The final results of Swaziland's parliamentary elections were not expected until late this week, officials said yesterday.

A second day of voting was held on Saturday after drenching rain prevented many voters from casting their ballots on October 16.

Observers said turnout appeared to be low on both days. Only 200,000 of the country's 937,000 eligible voters had registered.

Opposition groups and trade unions had called for a boycott, but there were no reports of any disturbances.

The election is not expected to bring any major change as political parties have been banned in the kingdom since 1973. Candidates, nominated in local chieftaincies, can stand as individuals only and not on a political platform.

Despite the ban, events on Saturday showed that some political activity was tolerated.

About 1,000 people, mostly members of opposition political parties and trade unions, gathered in Mbabane for the funeral of a leader of the anti-government Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU).

Plans to turn the funeral into a mass political rally were abandoned at the request of the family of Mxolisi Mhatha, the SFTU treasurer who died last week. Senior members of most opposition parties attended the funeral. — Reuter
EU gives Swaziland R30m for microprojects

James Hall

MBABANE — In an impoverished nation where 10% of the population benefits from small-scale community development schemes, microprojects have found a R30m patron in the European Community following the delayed implementation of a 1996 assistance agreement between the European Union (EU) and the Kingdom of Swaziland.

The delay was due to the ratification process of the Lomé convention by the 15 EU member states and a majority of its 70 African, Caribbean and Pacific nation "partners".

About 60% of the microprojects will be water supply schemes and new primary schools.

About 20% of the allocated money will go to infrastructure improvements such as rural electrification, bridges and roads. Income-generating projects to empower women and raise the standard of living among impoverished households will make up the final 20% of projects.

Total funding will be R40m, with the inclusion of an additional R10m from the economic planning and development ministry specified for small-scale "development actions".

These schemes are in partnership with local communities, which provide 50% of project costs in cash or by providing the labour needed.

Microprojects have generally proven successful in achieving their goals in Swaziland. As in other developing countries, their funding is an increasingly popular method of maximising foreign aid, with a target of achieving sustainability in socioeconomic development.

European Commission chargé d'affaires Andrew Heady said the goal was to decentralise the focus from large-scale projects "with a special emphasis on capacity building at the local level and improved regional co-ordination".

EU microproject financing will run through to 2001.

(313) 99 511/98
Swazi king appoints his government

James Hall

MBABANE — King Mswati III has appointed the principal members of his government for the new five-year parliamentary session, including the reappointment of Sibusiso Dlamini as prime minister.

Dlamini’s reappointment continues the custom of assigning the top government post to a member of the royal Dlamini family.

It was speculated that former foreign affairs minister Albert Shabangu would be the first non-Dlamini to be prime minister, but such a move is seen still to be unacceptable to palace elders.

Dlamini was moved from his job with the International Monetary Fund in Washington two years ago to become prime minister, at a time when mismanagement of the government of former prime minister Prince Mbilini Dlamini had reached crisis point.

The reaction was enthusiastic in the royal kraal when the king, resplendent in a crown of bright red lourie feathers, announced Dlamini’s reappointment. Seated in traditional attire in the giant cattle byre at the Ludzidzini royal residence, the king seemed to relish his status as absolute ruler as he kept 4,000 of his subjects in suspense for 40 minutes before announcing the appointment.

The king formally dissolved the powerful band of palace councillors, the Swazi National Council.

The council’s two-year term expired in September but councillors retained their posts until the new government was in place. The council played the role of adviser to the king on traditional matters.

The king announced his 20 appointments to the 30-member Senate earlier last week. He previously appointed 10 members to the House of Assembly, who along with elected members, voted 10 senators into the upper house.

The cabinet will be named this week, from the ranks of House and Senate members.

Previous cabinet ministers appointed by the king to the House and Senate who will retain their portfolios include Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Khoza and Foreign Minister Albert Shabangu.

Transportation Minister Dumisane Masango was the only cabinet minister to stand for election on his own. He was successful.
Swazis count cost of subsidy system

Preserving traditional lifestyles in Swaziland has come at a steep price, writes James Hall in Mbabane.

KING Mswati III's refusal to approve his own government's legislation to curb subsidies and prevent the environmental and economic costs of preserving traditional lifestyles has had a significant impact on the country's agricultural sector. The beneficiaries of these subsidies, peasant farmers on Swazi national land, are stuck between a rock and a hard place as they try to balance the cost of maintaining their land with the need to feed their families.

For example, a farmer on Swazi national land, who is able to receive a subsidy of $100 for each 1000 cattledays, can only afford to purchase a cow for $200, even though the cost of production has increased to $300. This results in a net loss of $100 for each cow, which is not sustainable in the long term.

The government has been reluctant to reduce these subsidies due to the political pressure from the rural population, which relies heavily on agriculture for its livelihood. The Royal Swaziland Agricultural Society (RSAS) has been advocating for the reduction of subsidies and the introduction of more market-oriented policies, but these have not been implemented due to the lack of political will.

The agriculture sector in Swaziland is facing a crisis where traditional practices are being replaced by modern farming methods. This has led to a decline in the number of small-scale farmers, who are unable to compete with larger, more efficient farms that receive government subsidies.

In conclusion, the Swazi government needs to re-evaluate its agricultural policies and provide a more sustainable framework for the country's farmers. This will require a shift away from subsidies and a focus on market-oriented approaches that support the growth of the country's agricultural sector.
Swazis turn to safer sex as Aids death toll rises

BHEKI MAKUPE
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

THERE was a time when telling a typical Swazi man to use condoms to avoid Aids was received as an insult.

That was a time when most men, particularly in rural areas, likened the use of condoms to eating a sweet wrapped in plastic.

At the beginning of the 1990s there was a general denial of the existence of the disease among Swazi men. The younger generation saw the call to abstain from sex as a ploy to deprive them of the pleasures of life while the older generation saw the call to stick to one sexual partner as being contrary to the traditional belief that a man could have as many women as he wanted.

With the number of deaths from the disease having risen sharply this year, this attitude is changing. More and more people are accepting the existence of the disease and taking action.

Recent reports rank Swaziland as having the third highest Aids death toll in 1998 among Southern African Development Community countries. Malawi has the highest Aids death rate followed by Zambia.

In 1992 the Swaziland ministry of health projected that there would be a sharp increase in the number of those dying from Aids in 1998. The high number of deaths this year has seen many people, particularly among the younger generation, waking up to the disease and seeking more education about it.

Eldah Maseko, a counsellor at the Aids Information and Support Centre, says in the past few months there has been an encouraging rise in the number of people being tested for the disease and seeking more information about it. In July, 27 people tested for HIV, 30 in August and 35 in September.

"With the increasing number of people dying every day, people are beginning to accept that there is a disease that is wiping out the community," she said.

Placements of death notices in newspapers have risen accordingly.

"What is scaring most people is that in many cases you find that somebody you knew, not necessarily slept with, is dead. It is scaring people and they are coming to us for help," says Maseko.

"Most of those who are being tested want to seek direction on what to do if found positive for HIV or start new lives if found negative."

The change of attitude is best expressed in letters published in local newspapers. Readers are writing in anonymously to warn others about the deadly virus with which they have been infected.

One reader from Big Bend recently wrote a moving letter to The Times of Swaziland newspaper bemoaning a lover who behaved like a gentleman yet left her to die with the Aids virus alone. Part of the letter read: "I am the fourth victim you have destroyed, including an innocent baby, but you still carry on victimising females knowing that you are a time bomb waiting to explode."

"You made me promises which you failed to keep. As my days slipped away I yearned to hear those promises and loving words but you were nowhere near to see the remains of your wrolicage."

Complicating the matter, however, has been the sudden rise in incest cases reported to the police this year.

Almost every week, an adult is brought before court on charges of raping children from as little as six months old.

Many cases involve fathers accused of raping their own daughters. There is a belief among some people that having sexual intercourse with a virgin will remove the Aids virus from one's body.

The Swaziland National Aids Programme recently reported that 3,000 cases of full-blown Aids were reported between 1987 and June 1998. However, programme manager Beatrice Dlamini says this is a "gross underestimation".

Keeping track of the Aids epidemic is the most difficult task for health workers. Apart from people's denial of the disease and the general fear of being tested the problem of Swaziland's greater population being concentrated in the rural areas where knowledge of the disease is at its lowest.

Says Maseko: "In recent times, we have seen a steady rise in the number of Aids cases in the rural areas because of the migration of those in the urban areas."

"If you consider that most men who work in the urban areas go back to their homes on weekends, there is bound to be a rise in those areas too."

"There is also the fact that some of the men in the rural areas go to the mines, even outside the country, and return infected only to pass on the disease to their wives."

"However, some of the rural women are beginning to learn about the disease and are testing and seeking counsel with us."

Between January and October this year, 88 people tested positive for HIV. "But the number, you must understand, does not include those who never returned to get their results."

As Swazis become better informed about the virus, staunch traditionalists are beginning to lose their battle against the use of condoms.

The traditionalists have argued that for centuries Swazi families have used pre-ejaculation withdrawal for family planning and that the technique worked well."
Swazi bomb seen as political pressure

By Bheki Makubu
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

A powerful bomb exploded in Swaziland's capital Mbabane yesterday killing at least one man and injuring two others, in what is being seen as mounting pressure from political groups to force the monarchy to allow multi-party democracy in the tiny kingdom.

The bomb, the second in four weeks, exploded while King Mswati III's new cabinet was being sworn in about 3km away, following non-party elections last month.

Mswati's father, King Sobhuza II, banned all parties in 1973, and opposition and union agitation to legalise them again has been intensifying over the past few years.

The explosion occurred at a building housing newly elected Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Khosa's office on Albert Mill Street just before 5pm. This building is the headquarters of the controversial tinkhundla system of modernised traditional rules which the monarchy has imposed on the country as a substitute for multi-party democracy. There is speculation that this may be the reason it was targeted.

Another explosion occurred on October 28 on Usushwana bridge in the busy industrial town of Matsapha, also around 5pm, two hours after King Mswati had driven past the spot.

Earlier this week, police rounded up leaders of opposition groups including Jan Sithole, leader of the main trade union grouping, the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) — to interrogate them about the earlier explosion. They also raided the home of Mario Masuku, leader of the banned People's United Democratic Movement (Pudemo) and confiscated documents.

The SFTU and Pudemo had called for a boycott of the non-party October elections, which went ahead anyway.
Swaziland businesses prepare for VAT border rules

Prior to March's announcement, Swaziland and South Africa had been negotiating for months to bring an end to cross-border sales by South Africa's border industries. The two countries reached an agreement to introduce a value-added tax (VAT) on goods and services in both countries, effective in March. This measure was aimed at preventing illegal trade and ensuring that businesses operating across the border paid taxes on their transactions.

The agreement requires businesses to register for VAT and to charge VAT on their goods and services. Non-compliant businesses will face penalties. The move is expected to generate additional revenue for both countries and to level the playing field for domestic and cross-border businesses.

The VAT border rules will affect businesses in the textile, clothing, furniture, and electronics sectors, among others. It is estimated that the VAT will increase the cost of goods for consumers and businesses, but it is also seen as a way to boost revenue for the Swaziland government.

The implementation of the VAT border rules is a significant step in the fight against cross-border trade and will have a major impact on the country's economy. The government is expected to closely monitor the effects of the VAT on businesses and adjust the rules accordingly.
Negative reaction to Swazi Order

MBABANE — Human rights groups, lawyers and media commentators have reacted negatively to King Mswati's Swazi Administration Order of 1998, which gives the monarch sweeping new powers to regulate the activities of his subjects through palace-appointed chiefs.

Reacting to chiefs' complaints that respect for their authority has eroded in recent times, and in response to a growing pro-democracy movement which seeks to replace an absolute monarchy with a constitutional monarchy, the king through his appointed council of ministers has given chiefs the power to arrest, try and convict their subjects, to search homes without a warrant, and to evict from ancestral lands subjects deemed guilty of breaking the law.

Political parties are outlawed in Swaziland, and political activity has been made a crime under the 1973 King's Decree. A fine of R15,000 will now be imposed on Swazis found guilty of undermining a chief's authority, and a R20,000 penalty awaits those who undermine "the lawful power or authority of the Ngwenyama (King)."

Noting that Swazis are not permitted legal representation either at a chief's trial or during the lengthy appeal process through traditional authorities, the Human Rights Organisation of Swaziland says: "The presumption is a defendant is guilty until he proves himself innocent of accusations brought against him before a chief who has had no training in law or criminal procedure."
Swazi mining industry adapts to survive

While diamonds are no longer available for the picking there are more minerals in the Swazi soil, writes James Hall in Mbabane.

FOCUS

[continued from page 15]
Slaying of Nkabinde removes driving force of UDM growth

Despite its loss, the fledgling party could gain in other aspects, writes Kevin O'Grady

BY ITS own admission, the United Democratic Movement (UDM) was heavily reliant on its secretary-general, Sisolo Nkabinde, as it strove to boost membership figures and expand the party’s branch network ahead of this year’s general elections.

The assassination of Nkabinde, also the party’s KwaZulu-Natal chairman, has now stranded the fledgling party without its foremost workhorse and organiser, not only in the province where he was based, but in many other parts of the country too.

Yet at the same time, the UDM had come in for heavy criticism because of its decision to embrace the expelled African National Congress (ANC) leader, alleged apartheid policeman and known warlord.

The criticism peaked while Nkabinde was on trial last year on multiple murder charges and scarcely abated following his acquittal and release from prison in May.

Although UDM president Bantu Holomisa and his deputy, Rosel Meyer, have often defended their decision to accept Nkabinde as a party member and leader, observers, including some UDM members, have now suggested the murder could be a blessing in disguise.

“The single issue over which the UDM has received the most criticism is now no longer an issue,” said one party member, who asked not to be named.

He also suggested that Nkabinde’s murder might have allowed the UDM to gain some territory in the battle for the moral high ground, though this could have been tempered by the apparent revenge killing of 11 ANC supporters in Richmond soon after Nkabinde’s death.

Yet Meyer, Holomisa and other party leaders would not be so callous as to admit to feeling quiet relief at Nkabinde’s killing, even if this was their sentiment.

For the moment, the party’s biggest challenge is to keep the momentum that has been building in the run-up to SA’s second all-race general and provincial elections.

In an interview soon after Nkabinde’s release from jail, Holomisa said the UDM had strong hopes for a good showing in the KwaZulu-Natal voting and made it clear Nkabinde was the man expected to lead the charge.

As long as Nkabinde could “get out of the midlands area and spread the gospel in the northern parts of the province and in the towns,” he could play an important role in attracting support to the UDM, Holomisa said.

According to UDM deputy secretary-general Annelle van Wyk, Nkabinde did just that and, in the process, made a massive contribution to party growth during the past eight months.

“At this stage we have 296 branches spread throughout KwaZulu-Natal, the most recent of which he (Nkabinde) opened in Ladysmith on Friday,” Van Wyk said. “Our constitution says each branch must have a minimum of 15 members, but some of those branches have between 300 and 400 members. This has all been done since he was released from prison.”

“It’s quite obvious when you lose a person like Sisolo that there will not be somebody there tomorrow morning who is able to fill his shoes. It’s a big loss for the UDM,” she said.

“Yet we must make sure that we don’t get side-tracked by this. We want to continue with (his) efforts and we have the plans in place.”

Van Wyk said the party’s national management committee would meet today to discuss how to fill the void left by Nkabinde’s death.

Sisolo Bhengu, UDM deputy chairman in KwaZulu-Natal, said Nkabinde was the party’s “engine” and would be sorely missed in the build-up to the elections.
Illega party releases manifesto

James Hall

MBABANE — Risking arrest, former Swaziland prime minister Obed Dlamini has announced the manifesto of a revived Ngwane National Liberatory Congress, stressing the need for democratisation for the economic and social well-being of the kingdom.

At a news conference, Dlamini, who was elected president of the illegal political party at a secret members' conference late last year, blasted palace resistance to a constitutional monarchy. "This has resulted in labour unrest and general dissatisfaction which have led to disinvestment in the Swazi economy," he said.

The Ngwane congress joins another illegal political party: Pudemo, to have emerged from the underground to campaign openly for political reform.

Political parties were banned by the king in 1973. Dlamini was appointed prime minister by King Mswati III in 1989. His administration was considered the most liberal in Swaziland's post-independence era and a backlash by palace conservatives saw him ousted in 1993.

Dlamini condemned donor countries such as the US and Britain for funding the Constitutional Review Commission, appointed by the king in 1996. "We have seen countries which are known for being champions of democracy, and which in other regions of the world have gone out of their way to support democracy, prostituting their principles when it comes to this country."

Dlamini said the Swazi Administration Order of 1998, decreed by King Mswati with his council of ministers, which strengthens the powers of chiefs while diminishing the role of the courts, "makes the current so-called constitutional process intended to allow Swazis to determine how we shall live a fraud and an irresponsible use of taxpayers money."

Dlamini said the king's passage of laws by decree makes parliament "a redundant institution, costly to maintain". He also condemned the recent parliamentary elections as a sham.

[Signature]

Jan 2011
Mswati to keep his chiefs law

James Hall

MBABANE — King Mswati III is determined to put an end to the outcry over the controversial Swazi Administration Order of 1998 which expands the powers of the traditional chiefs.

At a recent ceremony he insisted the decree would remain in force, damping the hopes of progressives and outlawed political parties that the law’s condemnation by human rights groups and the media would lead to a royal review.

Under the order chiefs may try their subjects, who are denied legal representation, and fine them up to R15 000 and jail them for up to three years for disobedience to a chief.

“I hope this will bring back the respect for chiefs which is now lost,” said King Mswati, addressing 3 000 warriors at the royal village Engabezweni recently.

Dressed in traditional attire, Mswati used the dismissal ceremony of his warrior regiments to deliver his annual informal state of the kingdom message. He railed against a crime wave in the kingdom.

Mario Masuku, president of the banned political party Pudemo, condemned Mswati for “compromising our Swazi heritage by politicising the sacred Inqowa and using it as a chance to take a swipe at dissenting voices”.

On the administration order Masuku said: “It is extremely unfortunate that this barbaric law which has been condemned unequivocally from the throne,

In seeming contradiction of the king’s assertion that the chiefs’ law is beyond debate, the Constitutional Review Commission said it is empowered to review all legislation, even palace decrees, “which affect people’s lives”.

BD 27/1199
Swaziland's woes work in SA's favour

James Hall

MBABANE — Investors are turning away from Swaziland to neighbouring SA in at least two important economic areas, foreign direct investment and the placement of excess banking funds.

Foreign direct investment in the kingdom has declined for seven years. In its latest quarterly report, the Central Bank of Swaziland says "positive political developments" in SA are a main reason for this.

Investors who flocked to Swaziland in the 1980s to escape economic sanctions imposed on SA during the apartheid era, and who were lured by the kingdom's relative political stability during SA's transitional period, "now view SA as a more attractive economy to operate from". The bank says: "The spontaneous industrial unrest in Swaziland over the past years has aggravated the situation."

The investment which persists comes from companies capitalising on the regional economic integration arrangements of the Southern African Development Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and the Southern African Customs Union as an incentive to open or retain operations in the kingdom. In some foreign markets, Swaziland enjoys preferential trade treatment because of the kingdom's status as a 'developing country'.

In money terms, growth of foreign direct investment in Swaziland fell from 21.9% in 1992 to 3.8% in 1996. Revised figures from 1997 show a negative growth of 2.4%.

Reinvestments from existing companies rose 11.4%. However, the central bank has projected a positive growth of 3.1% for this year. Total foreign direct investment in Swaziland last year was about R2 041.7m.

As predicted last winter when SA banks raised their interest rates, local banks are placing surplus funds in the SA money market.

The trend is accelerated by an absence of major project financing opportunities in the kingdom, and a lessening demand for bank credit.

The central bank blames a "general slump in domestic economic activity" for the decline in credit customers.
Swazi commissions a ‘charade’

James Hall

MBABANE — Fred Camphor, head of a commission of inquiry investigating public service inefficiency and waste in the public service, has criticised the government for wasting money on his and similar commissions.

Announcing his commission’s finding that the government should withdraw from housing business, Camphor said: “Government will be stupid not to implement these recommendations, because it spent a lot of money on the commission.” He said the government frequently appointed inquiries into crises and scandals, only to ignore the reports.

Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions secretary-general Jan Sithole says the commissions are charades. “They are instituted to give the appearance of government concern, in the hope that the public will forget about a problem by the time the commission finishes investigating. Reports are never made public, and recommendations are ignored, because government is not interested in solutions.”

Camphor said his commission, which probed waste and mismanagement in government housing for public servants, made proposals identical to those of the 1975 Wamalwa commission “whose findings were ignored”.

Recently, two inquiries into mismanagement and nepotism at the government garage proposed restructuring. The transport administration has powerful protectors among the king’s palace advisors, and resisted reform.

Commissions probed a police assault on unarmed students and the bankruptcy of the Swazi bank after government leaders defaulted on loans. Recommendations were not implemented. This week, a bribes-for-jobs scandal at the agriculture ministry is being investigated.
Swaziland gets R67m loan for rail

James Hall

MBABANE — Swaziland’s rail infrastructure will be revitalised through a R67m loan from the Italian government for the rehabilitation of the kingdom’s key east-west line.

Repayable in 18 years with a 12 year grace-period at 1% interest, the money is earmarked for the design and construction of rail lines linking the dry port of Matsapha with Phurwana and the rail hub at Mpaka with Siwenti at the Mozambican border.

Swaziland Railway hopes the rehabilitation efforts will reverse its declining fortunes. Import-export traffic reached a record low this year, says CEO Gideon Mahlalela.

A passenger train service was introduced to Maputo and Durban last year in an attempt to diversify the company’s revenue base, but ticket sales proved disappointing. Costly rail accidents last year involving cargo and attributable to human error have also cut into earnings.

The success of the dry port at Matsapha, which allows cargo containers to be off-loaded from ships at Durban and Maputo harbours directly onto trains which bring them to Swaziland’s main industrial area, remains a bulwark against the company’s chief competitor, the trucking industry. But “the slightest disruption in transport service or economic conditions” can lead to permanent loss of customers, says Mahlalela.

The railway is vulnerable to economic shifts. The past year saw a drop in rail usage by Swaziland’s major exports, sugar and wood products. Sugar dropped as a result of lower export volume and timber due to a drop in demand from the SA mining industry after mine closures.

Woodpulp, once a major rail user, “has virtually disappeared from rail”, says Mahlalela, who blames a change in customer transport strategy following the Asian economic crisis which cut woodpulp demand.

The railway’s losses nullified increased telephone and internet usage in the kingdom to cause a 0.4% decline in the transport and communication sector’s contribution to the overall economy.

(312) 60 171 2199
Deadline set for Swazi constitutional review

James Hall

MBABANE — King Mswati III has ordered the controversial Constitutional Review Commission to complete its work by the end of the year.

Speaking at the opening of parliament on Friday, the king issued a surprise deadline following criticism that the commission's programme was a hoax intended to delay rather than facilitate political change.

Established by royal decree in 1996, with a mandate to deliver its report in two years, the commission requested a two-year extension last year. Thus far, it has distributed copies of the 1973 King's Decree which banned political parties in the kingdom, abrogated the 1968 Independence constitution's Bill of Rights and declared a state of emergency which is still in effect.

No submissions from the public have been heard and there is no indication when these will begin.

On Thursday Richard Zink, ambassador from the European Union which partly funds the review exercise, made future funding conditional on a report stating how the EU's recommendations have been implemented.

Other donor nations have privately expressed reservations about the efficacy of the commission.

The Swaziland Democratic Alliance and the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions have called for the restructuring of the commission into an "all-inclusive constitutional forum".

"We must push forward with proposals such as the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative as well as projects designed to provide more (tourist) accommodation and improved entertainment attractions," Mswati said.

National budget priorities should be directed towards poverty alleviation and social service delivery, with fresh thinking to make the latter more effective. Privatisation of public enterprises was also needed to increase efficiency, Mswati said.

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Opposition forces have enough anti-government ammunition but they need to be properly grenaded, warns James Hall in Abidjan.

Swaziland's progressives Jack strategy to unsettle King.
Swazi govt shelves bill after attacks

MBABANE — The Swaziland government has decided to shelve a controversial bill aimed at regulating the country’s media, a government spokesman said yesterday.

Information and Public Service Minister Magwegwa Mdluli made the announcement following a bitter attack from several quarters on the bill — which would have set up a media council — at a two-day journalists’ conference held at the town of Nhlangano.

Mdluli said he had accepted a resolution passed by the journalists saying the government and media should jointly put together a media and communications policy within the next three months.

The meeting also called for journalists, in consultation with the government, to set up a self-regulatory media council within four months of the adoption of the conference report.

The journalists also urged the government to examine and update the country’s libel and defamation laws within the next six months. — Sapa-DPA.
Swazis go for development
Finance minister concerned by country's about heavy reliance on customs union

James Hall

MBABANE — There has been mixed reaction from local economists, political and labour leaders to this year's budget presented by Finance Minister John Carmichael.

Carmichael's R2.82bn budget focused on the goals of the national development strategy. "This is a policy-oriented budget," said an economist with accountancy firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers. "As such it sinks or swims with the success of the development strategy."

Another economist at that firm, John Bennett, said: "It is a positive budget overall, but we now need action." The minister "could have been more adventurous on the privatisation process of state-owned enterprises".

Carmichael advocated a go-slow approach to the privatisation of most state-owned enterprises, but announced progress on the sale of Royal Swaziland National Airways, the Swaziland Dairy Board and the money-losing Pigg's Peak Hotel.

Of the R1.961bn budgeted for recurring expenditure in the new fiscal year, up 13.5% from last year, Carmichael announced that the largest chunk, 27.1%, would go to education and training, in keeping with NDS goals. This pleased most budget commentators.

The public service gets 24.6% of expenditures. To help create a safe environment for foreign investment, 20.4% of the budget was allocated for public order, safety and defence. Health services get 9.3%.

A spokesman for the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, said: "The goal of crime prevention is worthwhile, but the secret army budget, which cannot be debated by parliament, will most likely go to internal security, soldiers enforcing the king's decree banning political opposition."

Carmichael said the largest source of the budgeted R2.516bn revenue was about R1.221.5m from the SA Customs Union. "This clearly illustrates the vulnerability of our revenue base."

Musa Hope, Federation of Swaziland Employers president, agreed that this reliance was unhealthy. "We must expand our revenue base, which means foreign direct investment, something we have not seen in any significant way in Swaziland in five years. The minister's budget allocation for education and training is therefore most important."

Other revenue will come from personal income tax (R532m), sales tax (R293m), corporate tax (R262.3m), grants (R110.5m) and sugar export levy (R18.4m).

Carmichael responded to numerous calls for tax reform by promising a new tax bill this year, but he was short on specifics. Treasury sources suggest a corporate tax decrease to 30% from the present 37.5%. Jimson Gwebu, treasurer of the Swaziland Union of Financial Institutions and Allied Workers, said: "We need the company tax to be reduced to match that of neighbouring countries because we cannot see any investors coming here if we remain where we are."

No dissenting voices were raised against the R944.4m capital budget, of which R155.4m is for upgrading road infrastructure and R95m for the Komati River Basin programme, which includes construction of the Maguga dam.

The minister announced a slight increase in the budget deficit to "below the critical ratio of 5% of GDP". Government critic Mario Masuku, president of the banned Pudemo political party, said that the deficit of R262.2m was "unacceptable", but was pleased that spending priorities were education and training. He accepted the need for less onerous company tax.

Assuming a modest turnaround in Asian economies that import Swazi goods, Carmichael surmised 2% to 3% growth in the coming fiscal year after the previous year's estimated downturn.

"By the year 2022 the kingdom of Swaziland will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries, founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability," Carmichael predicted.
Planned Swazi chert mine causes concern

MBABANE — A clash between the need for jobs and environmental preservation is playing itself out in Swaziland where a Taiwanese company plans to mine green chert in the heart of the Malolotja Nature Reserve.

Pending approval by the Swaziland Environmental Authority, operations are set to begin next month in the northern Hhohho region. If it goes ahead Swaziland Greenstone Quarry will be Swaziland’s first significant mining operation since the closure of Dvokwako diamond mine in 1996. Michael Lee Enterprises obtained the greenstone quarry lease from King Mswati.

A study of SA and Swaziland geological formations found Malolotja was the only site available for mining high-quality green chert, which the company says is "much in demand in the east for jewellery and dimension stone (fashioned into slabs, tiles and ornaments)."

Green chert is fetching R5 000 a ton for dimension stone quality and R18/kg for jewellery quality.

The company expects to produce 300 tons a month and anticipates a 12-year lifespan for its quarry. The sale of 3 600 tons annually would yield revenues of R21.6m — equal to 0.7% of Swaziland’s current annual export revenues. About 12% of gross sales will be paid to the Swazi government and government royalties over the quarry’s lifespan are estimated at R67.2m, with a three- to six-fold increase depending on the quality of the mined stone.

Set against these benefits, says the Swaziland National Trust Commission which runs the reserve that is considered the crown jewel of Swaziland’s park system, "is the inescapable fact that it is illegal to mine in a nature reserve".

The commission says an environmental impact assessment by the Swaziland Environmental Authority predicts a loss of fertility over the stone stocks due to hydrocarbon pollution and a bad impact on animal breeding periods due to production noise. Environmentalists suggest political pressure and bribery have been applied to circumvent regulations prohibiting mining in protected areas.

The mining firm has proposed a range of mitigation measures, including suspending quarrying during the breeding periods of priority species.

Residents displaced by the reserve, who claim to have been “sacrificed for animals” and given little or no compensation, voted to support the mining at a meeting where Michael Lee Enterprises public relations officer Reuben Mamahala promised jobs for more than 100 people from the 70 families living near the reserve. A spokesman for conservation group Green Cross says employment should not come from a temporary mining operation, but by exploiting the tourist potential of the same area left in pristine condition.
AIDS poses serious crisis for Swaziland

James Hall

MBABANE — The first comprehensive review of the effect of AIDS on Swaziland’s economy confirms what most employers already know: the disease is significantly compromising the Swazi workforce.

One major manufacturing concern at the Matsapha Industrial Site says five workers a week die of AIDS-related illnesses.

The education ministry reports three to four AIDS deaths a week among the nation’s 8,000 teachers.

A survey sponsored by Unicef and released last week says 293,000 Swazis out of a population of slightly less than 1 million are infected with HIV. AIDS will have “a severe social and economic impact between the years 2000 and 2015,” with an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 deaths annually, says the report.

Swaziland has a workforce of 80,000 in the public sector and 20,000 public servants.

“The Swaziland AIDS epidemic could be worse than in other countries due to the nation’s small size, and the limited response to the epidemic,” says the report.

The epidemic has made orphans of 112,000 children — 22% of all children below 15 years of age. About 4% to 5% of Swazi children are HIV-positive.

People with the greatest risk of contracting HIV are those between the economically productive ages of 15 to 29. The report blames government complacency, a culture of denial, the “low sociocultural status of women”, and a lack of an AIDS strategy for the disease’s proliferation.
Swaziland loses urgently needed grants due to its perceived wealth

James Hall

MBABANE — Swaziland is being denied access to urgently needed grant money because of its perceived affluence.

In response, the government has launched a campaign to prove to donor countries and world aid organisations that conditions are worse than they seem.

Already a badly needed highway from the capital, Mbabane, to the Nqumenya border post, which handles most motor traffic from SA, has been postponed by one fiscal year due to a change in Swaziland's loan status triggered by a solid economic performance.

The African Development Bank has disqualified Swaziland from receiving African Development Fund loans, serviced at 0.7% interest.

Swaziland's deficit of only 2.5% of gross domestic income has elevated the kingdom on a statistic basis into the development bank's category of "middle-income societies". Swaziland now qualifies only for loans repaid at 4% interest.

The finance ministry has complained that "external sponsorship" from donor nations has dried up due to the perceived improvement in Swaziland's economic status. The ministry has prepared a poverty assessment study to highlight the people's needs. About 66% of Swazis officially live below the poverty line.

A development bank human resources official, Alice Hamer, admitted that the statistics did not reflect the economic situation, but noted that this was not an isolated case, referring to SA. She promised a review.

Further complicating Swaziland's attempts to secure donor funds are objections from sponsors that the nation's approach to loan solicitation is ad hoc and uncoordinated, making the process vulnerable to political abuse.

In response, government spending is being disciplined along the guidelines of a development strategy and an upcoming revision of the economic and social reforms promised by Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini.
WORLD'S THIRD HIGHEST RATE OF HIV INFECTION

Swaziland faces crisis

MBABANE: With the constant flux of migrants between SA and other Southern African countries, the Aids problem is of growing concern.

ALTHOUGH Swaziland, with a population of less than one million, has the third-highest rate of HIV Infection in the world, its government has been slow to deal with the problem.

More than 300 000 Swazis are already living with HIV and it is estimated that between 2000 and 2015, 30 000 to 40 000 people will die of Aids each year, according to a recent Unicef report.

"Aids has already caused a marked increase in mortality and morbidity, driving up healthcare costs and increasing demand for services, while large numbers of skilled personnel in public and private sectors are dying," says the report.

"There is no preparedness within government, which has a false sense of security that the ministry of health and social welfare is taking care of the issue."

Three to four of the country's teachers die each week. In manufacturing five skilled workers die weekly, the report said.

The Swaziland epidemic is worse than in many other countries because Swaziland is so small and because there has been a limited response from the government. Almost no studies have been done on the effects of HIV/Aids and very little money has been allocated for research.

The report estimates there will be 112 000 orphans, 22% of children under the age of 15, while 20 000 to 25 000 (four to five percent) of children in Swaziland are infected.

The cost of failing to develop a comprehensive strategy is enormous, including a loss of productivity, social unrest from marginalised children, high disease burden, an over-stretched health service and job losses because of Aids-related diseases such as TB.

The report indicates that there are many barriers to effective control, one of them being denial.

Most people, including policy-makers, are unaware that almost one-third of the population is infected. There is also inconsistent support for HIV-positive people who have revealed their status to help educate the population.

A comprehensive plan to fight the disease still has to be drawn up.

Among the hurdles facing an effective policy are women's low status, widespread poverty and the dependence of rural households on remittances from migrant workers.

In response to the report Swazi Health Minister Phetsile Dlamini yesterday said a national committee had been established to review Aids strategies. — AIA, Independent Foreign Service, Sapa
Farmers turn to sugar in Swaziland

JAMES HALL 00 3/5/99

MBABANE - The fad cultivation of sugar cane this past year is distorting Swaziland's agriculture-based economy by displacing other crops and making the sector vulnerable to world prices.

Sugar production is expected to reach a record 485,000 tons during the current cropping season, less than the anticipated 500,000 tons, but up from 475,785 tons last year.

Sugar is Swaziland's major export earner and the kingdom enjoys quotas in Europe and the US. About 174,000 tons are destined for the European Union under the Lomé Convention, while 20,000 tons will go to the US. About 35,000 tons are used domestically, while 17,000 tons are exported to other countries in the Southern African Customs Union.

But with sugar export quotas filled, excess product will have to compete in the world market at prevailing prices. Swaziland's product has a production price advantage because it is cheaper to produce sugar from cane than from the sugar beet grown in Europe. But lower prices may frustrate small farmers who are turning to cane cultivation in increasing numbers.

Last year King Mswati urged small farmers to form sugar-growing co-operatives. However, last week the Agriculture Minister, Roy Farquhar, pleaded with local farmers not to further displace their pineapple crop. This is seen as a U-turn by the kingdom from consolidation under sugar back towards diversification.
SA's new trade agreement with the European Union will cause some uncomfortable ripples for its southern African neighbours.
Swazi parks project biggest in 30 years

James Hall

MBABANE — Five game parks and nature reserves are being combined to form the Lubombo Conservancy, a development regarded as Swaziland’s biggest tourism initiative since independence in 1968.

At a recent signing ceremony, King Mswati inaugurated the parks and reserves in the lowveld Lubombo region as a single conservancy.

Staff from the different reserves are expected to be combined under one authority, although details have not yet been finalised. The fences separating the adjacent parks are being dismantled, while the more isolated portions are expected to be linked through land acquisition at a later stage.

At the heart of the 60 000ha attraction is Hlane Royal Game Park, previously the nation’s largest game park and site of the traditional royal hunt.

Joined to Hlane will be Mlwula Nature Reserve, managed by the Swaziland National Trust Commission; Mbuluzi Game Reserve, operated on land leased from Tambankutu Sugar Estates; Sisa Ranch, managed by the department of veterinary and livestock services; and Shewula Community Game Reserve, operated by the area’s residents on land given by a local chief.

Ted Reilly, founder of Swaziland Big Game Park, which manages Hlane, said his parks drew 100 000 visitors annually. Tourism was the kingdom’s “only long-term hope for self-sustainability”. Tourism Minister George Vilakati said 1 000 jobs would be created.

The Lubombo Conservancy is an outgrowth of the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative, entered into by Swaziland, SA and Mozambique. It is part of the Maputo Corridor Programme. The agreement calls for a concerted three-nation effort to open the area to tourism.

Located at Swaziland’s border with Mozambique, the Lubombo Conservancy may one day be incorporated into the three-nation “Peace Park” spanning Swaziland, Mozambique and SA.

The British Council is financing construction of accommodation at the Shewula portion of the conservancy, and at Mbuluzi, 20 sites are being developed for private lodges.
Coal leads the way as Swazi mines crank up mineral output

MBABANE — Mineral production rose in Swaziland’s mining sector last year, led by coal, according to figures released by the geological survey and mines department.

The kingdom’s only coal mine, Maloma, produced 410 021 metric tons, more than double the output of 203 115 metric tons in 1997.

The mine’s high-quality anthracite is being sought by customers in the UK, Brazil and Europe. With a change from open cast operations to underground mining, Maloma is now geared up to produce 40 000 tons a month.

The Mlalas Colleries Mine remains closed, with 2.5 million tons of its estimated 35-million ton reserves extracted. The natural resources ministry reports investors have shown interest in reopening the coke mine, whose 31-year lifespan is based on an annual extraction rate of 155 000 tons.

Production of chrysotile asbestos — the industry’s top revenue earner — at the Bulimbi mine was 27 693 metric tons last year, up from 25 888 the year before. A slight decline in exports to the UK, Brazil, SA and the Far East was offset by a rise in world asbestos prices.

Though production of quarried stone was halved in the last quarter of 1996, total output for the year was 453 334 metric tons, off slightly from the previous year’s 455 753 but more than double the 1996 output.

The stone is used exclusively in local public works projects, and demand is expected to be stable. The Maguga dam, an outgrowth of the Komati Basin Treaty signed by Swaziland and SA, will continue to be a major customer until its completion in 2001. Three new highways are planned or being built. One will link the capital Mbabane with the border post at Oshoek, which is most heavily used by SA traffic.

The past year saw no gold or diamond output, the latter because of the Dvokolwako diamond mine’s continued closure. The reopening of the Ngwenjiron ore mine awaits new technology, to make the excavation of low-grade ore profitable once again.
Cheap Swaziland fuel draws in the neighbours

James Hall

MBABANE — Swaziland's petrol price, which is about 27% cheaper than SA's, is proving a boon for locals and an attraction for motorists from neighbouring SA and Mozambique.

Swaziland's unleaded petrol is R1.99/l against SA's price of R2.68 and the Swazi tourism ministry has begun to mention cheap fuel prices in its campaign to promote the kingdom. SA's petrol rose this month following an increase in world crude oil prices. Another price rise is expected later this year.

The Swaziland government, which does not tax fuel heavily, has no plans to raise prices. World oil price fluctuations are absorbed by an energy slate, a cash reserve controlled by the natural resources ministry. Ministry principal secretary Sandile Ceko said a 7c/l fuel increase announced by Finance Minister John Carmichael in his budget speech to parliament in February — a 5c fuel tax and a 2c increase in the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund — would be entirely absorbed by government's fuel slate.

"Retailers and consumers will not feel the increase."

Mozambique's fuel prices vary by location, with the top price reported at Beira, where a litre of unleaded gasoline costs R7.
Expert takes Swazi hot seat

John Carmichael aims to attract foreign direct investment and build entrepreneurship

James Hall

MBABANE — New Finance Minister John Carmichael stands out in Swazi politics as a man entrusted with a cabinet hot seat even though he is not one of the Dlamini royal clan.

Locals tend to think he was chosen for his expertise. Now the gentlemanly minister is seeking to create a culture of entrepreneurship among the 1-million subjects of King Mswati III.

It takes a certain evangelical fervour to promote the economy of a tiny landlocked kingdom over powerful neighbours, but the son of devout Christians lauds Swazi virtues when he says: "Our nation remains one of the most socially integrated societies in the region. We have an educated, highly motivated workforce capable of raising its standard of living once people have learnt their own capabilities."

Foreign direct investment, the second pillar of his policy to pull the Swazi economy out of its doldrums, is being sought through incentives, but he is down to earth about prospects in a regional recession. Annual growth of 2% to 3% is expected, and Carmichael has directed the largest share, 27% of the R2.8bn budget to education and training.

Carmichael — who was raised in Swaziland's rural Lubombo region near Mozambique, and educated at a mission school built by his father on their farm — believes the culture of entrepreneurship will take root because expectations have changed, most of the population is literate and education levels are rising. Job creation, however, is a paramount need with unemployment of 45%.

He believes Swaziland has attractions for foreign investors. His baritone voice grows impassioned as he emphasises Swaziland's strength in having markets where it enjoys guaranteed sales. "We are nowhere near meeting our quotas, such as beef, sugar and textiles to the European Union. Other countries have filled their quotas, they cannot expand. Their companies should relocate to Swaziland."

Carmichael points to a law recently passed by parliament to safeguard investors, which resulted from business fears about land confiscation in Africa. He will also have to shepherd amendments to income tax and corporate tax laws through parliament this year. "The goal is to achieve a lower tax rate for all taxpayers, with minimal loss on government revenue. This will be achieved only through widening the tax base. The primary aim is to make Swaziland attractive to investors," he says.

Several thorny issues must be dealt with to achieve the twin goals of accelerated foreign direct investment and Swazi entrepreneurial growth. Privatisation of state-owned enterprises is the sort of political football many a finance minister has juggling, but Carmichael is championing a fund into which government will offload its minority stakes in companies it co-owns.

This fund will finance small entrepreneurial projects. "Proceeds of any future divestitures will be injected into the fund, which will become a vehicle of people-based capitalism."

The opinion of the Swazi business community is that Carmichael has the stuff to do the job, but like all nonmembers of the ruling Dlamini clan he may be hobbled by a lack of political clout.

"We trust John to do the right thing," says the director of a manufacturing concern at the Matsapha industrial site. "But can he stand up to palace interference in economic matters?"

Clashing interests may prevent Carmichael from delivering on one of his most solemn promises — that the new income tax bill will be tabled before parliament by month's end.

With only a few parliamentary sessions remaining and reported backstage wrangling over the bill's provisions, the deadline is somewhat elusive.

However, Carmichael's last job as housing minister was a testing ground, a tenure filled with controversy both political — he had to quell corruption scandals involving the city councils of Manzini and Mbabane — and personal — his family was awarded a monopoly on the country's lottery, raising criticism over apparent cronyism in the cabinet. Yet he has emerged politically unscathed.

Carmichael promises the culture of entrepreneurship will be enhanced this year, with legislation to transform the somnolent Swaziland stock market into a fully fledged stock exchange. "Given the negotiations with a major sugar company, it is anticipated that the market capitalisation will increase from R5bn to more than R1bn," he says.

The man whose signature will soon appear on Swazi currency is leaving his mark on the economy in other ways, through efforts to awaken Swazis to their entrepreneurial potential, so freeing them of donor dependency, and with investor-enticing policies. "Poverty alleviation is one of the key aims for the immediate future," he says.
ANC swipe at bosses, union

Kgasela Mol蔺the yesterday criticised management and workers for the killing of a National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) leader at West Driefontein gold mine last week.

Speaking at a service for the NUM's regional chairman, Selby Mayise, Mol蔺the said police should investigate "manipulation" by Gold Field management on changes to the Mineworkers Provident Fund, the issue which ignited workers' anger.

He said: "It is all the more tragic that workers, who, prior to the emergence of the union, were subjected to exploitation, and oppression, should be involved in the murder of one dedicated to their emancipation."

Management, he said, had a responsibility to "communicate the facts about the changes to the fund, instead of allowing rumours that Mayise and the union had taken workers' money to continue."

Union sources said disgruntled members were jumping from the NUM to rival organisations like the United Workers Union of SA (Uwusa) and Mouthpeace Workers Union.

Mayise's death is the second killing of a NUM leader on the West Rand. Last month a branch chairman of Deilkraal was shot.
Fewer Swazi citizens have jobs, finance ministry finds

Employers body warns of social instability, writes James Hall

MBABANE — The Swaziland finance ministry reports that fewer citizens were working last year than the year before, though its Central Statistical Office admits employment figures for the thriving informal sector are imprecise.

Excluding citizens employed in SA mines, whose numbers are diminishing due to retrenchments, 307 000 people are at work in the kingdom. This figure is off by 4 000 jobs from the previous year. Among the employed, 63 500 work in the private sector, 26 400 are public sector government employees, while 3 000 are soldiers and an estimated 17 000 people are employed in the informal sector.

Manufacturing remains the biggest employer, followed by agriculture and distribution. The latter two sectors, along with forestry and local mining, saw a decrease in total workforce of 5.5% last year. However, this was balanced by a 5.5% increase in employment in the manufacturing, construction, transport monetary and services sectors. A 20% increase in transportation sector jobs in the previous year is credited to a proliferation of minibuses serving or linking urban areas.

The ministry estimates that while formal sector employment has declined, informal-sector employment is growing at 4.5% a year. Jobs in the sector range from small farmers, cattle owners on Swazi national land, small traders and street-vendors, domestic workers and a hodgepodge of menial and unskilled labour. Swaziland’s unemployment rate continues to fluctuate between 40% and 45%. Of the unemployed, 54% are between the ages of 12 and 24, and 29% are between 25 and 34 years of age, reflecting the demographics of Swaziland’s predominantly young population. However, the Federation of Swaziland Employers notes that the large number of unemployed young people in the country present a worrisome potential for social instability.

A spokesman for the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions says of the latest employment figures that declining job opportunities were a result of moribund government economic policies, and the wariness of foreign business people to invest in an undemocratic state. In response, a finance ministry official cited several agreements entered into by the government — such as the Lohombo spatial developmental initiative — which are geared towards increasing employment opportunities.
Swazi prince challenges Mswati

MBABANE — For the second time in as many months, Constitutional Review Commission chairman Prince Mangaliso Dlamini has used King Mswati's absence from the country to challenge the king's year-end deadline for completion of the commission's work and to impose press restrictions.

While King Mswati was in Pretoria at the presidential inauguration of Thabo Mbeki, Mangaliso told a gathering of chiefs he may "simply ask the king for an extension of time" to deliver a draft Constitution "if it's time we need".

"The chairman blasted as "liars who do not know the facts" the critics of his decision to ban news coverage when Swazis submit their views to the commission. But he acknowledged there is nothing in the government gazette establishing the commission that prohibits press coverage.

One of the chiefs in attendance, Simelane Galeni, himself a commissioner, announced an extension of the commission's press policy banning publication of commission deliberations or preliminary reports, calling these "secrets which must not fall into the hands of Swaziland's enemies".

An editor of the Swazi Observer, which is owned by Tshoyo TakaNkowane, the royal conglomerate headed by Mangaliso, said: "The prince is a classic autocrat who has always despised the press because he cannot abide criticism. The idea that the people's submissions are state secrets which must be kept from Swaziland's enemies is bizarre, given the purpose of the (commission) is to allow all Swazis to publicly express their views."

Mangaliso has called the press ban "a trivial matter". Reporters exposed the ban to the king when he returned from an overseas trip in May, prompting the monarch to deny knowledge of the ban.

The commission's desire to ignore the deadline appeared to be dashed when Mswati, speaking through his brother Prince Phakamankhulu while he was in SA, said: "We look forward to the report of the commission by the end of this year."

(312) 80 22 17 97
Aid eases food crisis in Lesotho

MASERU – Lesotho faces a cereal shortage of more than 162 000 tons this year to feed its population, a newsletter from the national early warning unit of the Lesotho Disaster Management Authority said yesterday.

The letter said the cereal shortage would have to be covered through imports from South Africa or international food aid.

The cereal imports to be undertaken by major millers include 134 800 tons of maize and 70 450 tons of wheat. The United Nations world food programme will provide 22 900 tons of maize.

The early warning unit said the cause of the shortage was attributed to the fact that a sizeable portion of the crop, especially maize, was damaged beyond recovery during the long dry spell that affected the country during January to March.

Assisting farmers

As part of the Lesotho government’s plan to assist farmers in boosting agricultural production, minister of agriculture cooperative and land reclamation Kelebone Maope announced the government was seriously considering ways of assisting farmers to prepare to plough their seeds in the coming summer season.

The business community was also hit by last year’s political turmoil in the kingdom. Two major agricultural projects, which were to have been implemented with the help of the World Bank and Japan, were disrupted as well.

Meanwhile, the disaster management authority provided emergency food to more than 65 000 needy families in the lowland district of Lesotho.

More than 40 000 tons of maize was distributed to needy families, targeting specifically the elderly and the disabled. Able-bodied people will be provided with 50kg maize meal rations. – Sapa
Swazis get new business

James Hall

MBABANE.—Swaziland’s economic performance may be lackluster, but this has not deterred new business people, as evidenced by a 38% increase in registered companies.

Releasing figures for the first half of 1999, ending June 15, the justice ministry, which registers companies, reported 444 new companies, up from 320 last year.

There are 15,600 local and foreign-owned companies registered in Swaziland. The number of nonoperational companies is not known.

The registrar of companies for the justice ministry, Robert Dlamini, attributed the rise in company registrations to proliferating small and medium enterprises.

There were a few new loan programmes to assist small entrepreneurs, he said. "Their impact is reflected in the rising number of small and medium companies being registered."

Major foreign direct investment in Swaziland accounted for few new registrations. However, he said: "We are also seeing a trend among foreigners who seek Swaziland residence permits to set up phoney paper companies under the pretext that they have legitimate business in the kingdom."
First victory for Swazi environment watchdog

James Hall

MBABANE — The Swaziland Environmental Authority has announced its first major environmental accomplishment.

It involves three major manufacturing firms that, by their own admission, were polluting the nation’s waterways.

The relatively new environmental authority said that paper pulp manufacturer Sappi Usuto, garment manufacturer Natex and Swazi Paper Mills no longer discharge effluent into Swaziland’s rivers.

The country relies on irrigation from this scarce resource to support its key agricultural sector. About half of all Swazis rely on untreated water fetched from rivers for domestic use.

Sappi Usuto admitted to discharging oil and chemical pollutants into the heavily-utilised Usuthu River — mainly through spillage from storage tanks.

Monitor

"At the urging of the environmental authority, established in 1996 to monitor the kingdom’s ecosystems, the firms installed waste management machinery," Jameson Vilakati, chairman of the environmental authority, said.

"The Usuthu River, is no longer contaminated by the three companies. This is a great achievement for us as it means clean water for the people."

Natex was dumping non-toxic chemical dyes used in garment manufacturing, tinting the river with assorted colours.

Environmental concerns have been given new impetus in the government’s recently-launched economic and social reform agenda, after having been given a lower priority in preference to luring foreign direct investment.

"We are slowly but surely getting cooperation from companies in an effort to protect the environment," said Vilakati.
Row Shatters AIDS Complacency
MBABANE — Clauses calling for progress towards statutory human rights and unfettered rights for political parties have allegedly been marginalised from Swaziland's long-awaited national development strategy, say sources.

The strategy is designed to steer Swaziland's economic and social growth for the next quarter century.

Palace advisors to King Mswati have objected to chapters recommending political and social liberalisation.

The strategy was to have been launched by King Mswati a week ago. Officially, the launch was postponed because of palace mourning over the death of one of King Sobhuza II's last remaining wives.

Mario Masuku, president of the outlawed political party Pudemo, cited intense opposition from the Swaziland National Council Advisory Committee, the monarch's hand-picked inner council, as the reason for the delay.

The council majority objected that the strategy's clauses dealing with political issues pre-empted the work of the Constitutional Review Commission — which is hearing submissions from Swazis with the intent of formulating a new government document — and called for deletions.

The strategy was initiated by then-prime minister Obed Dlamini, whose relative political liberalism was said to have infuriated the king's council.

Earlier this year, he was made head of the illegal political party the Ngwane National Congress.

The strategy has been complemented by Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini's own document, titled the Economic and Social Reform Agenda.

At a recent press conference, King Mswati appeared to downplay the importance of the strategy, saying that it was merely an expression of people's opinions, not policy.

The Human Rights Association of Swaziland cautioned against the deletion of human rights clauses.
Swaziland cuts its company tax to 30% - 20/07/99

James Hall

MABANE - Swaziland has joined other members of the Southern African Customs Union in cutting the rate of corporate tax, signalling a growing harmonisation of policies in the five-nation trading bloc.

Finance Minister John Carmichael recently announced a corporate tax rate cut from 37% to 30% to be included in a tax bill soon to be tabled in Parliament. The new company tax rate will bring Swaziland in line with SA where companies are also taxed at 30%. It will also improve its position in relation to other regional economies.

Of the customs union countries - SA, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland - Namibia has the highest rate of 40% and Botswana the lowest of 15%. Botswana companies customarily pay an Additional Company Tax of 10%, making for an effective rate of 25%. Botswana's industries, which produce ''approved manufactured items'', are taxed at a nominal 5% rate.

Lesotho's dual corporate tax stands at 35% for most businesses and a special 15% rate for manufacturers.

Carmichael said 15 February that, tax reforms would make Swaziland more attractive to foreign direct investors.

A government economist who is pushing for a special low tax rate for manufacturers, similar to Lesotho's and Botswana's, says: "Welcome as the corporate tax reduction is, it gives us tax equality with other regional players, rather than a dramatic advantage."

While some Swazi companies have expressed disappointment that the new corporate tax rate will not be retroactive to the last tax year, which ended on June 30, most expressed relief that the reform has been announced.

Musa Hope, executive director of the Federation of Swazi employers, says the tax reduction will spur economic growth by freeing up money for factory expansion and other reinvestment.

"Companies have been operating on barest margins (because of) high corporate taxes," he says.

"Now their situation will improve, which will be an impetus for better economic growth in Swaziland."

Employers are pressing for a still lower company tax, saying that would create a domino effect of reinvestment leading to higher government revenues, and lower unemployment and crime.

A spokesman for Standard Bank says the lower corporate tax rate is expected to facilitate savings, now at an historic low in the kingdom, and so boost reserves.

Further alignment of the union's economic policies is expected as SA's neighbours come under pressure to diversify their revenue bases. This will, in part, stem from the decline in income from the union's common customs and excise revenue kitty when the trading arrangement is reformed.

These countries have already expressed their intention to introduce value added tax. Business organisations, such as the SA Chamber of Business, have suggested that the same rate of VAT as in SA - of 14% - should be charged in the union.
Efforts to oust Swazi prime minister fail

MBABANE—A first parliamentary vote of no-confidence in Swaziland history against a prime minister has been narrowly avoided by incumbent Sibusiso Dlamini and signals bolder steps by his enemies in government and royal circles to unseat him.

No Swazi prime minister has yet served his full five-year term of office.

A three-year stint is the norm, and August is usually the month when King Mswati announces government changes. Dlamini was appointed prime minister in August 1998. He was recalled from Washington, where he served as an executive with the World Bank. Dlamini spearheaded fiscal reform and ordered cutbacks on frivolous government spending and official perks, such as expensive junkets to foreign lands undertaken by officials at public expense. The cost-cutting moves have been met with resentment by former beneficiaries in government.

At Mswati's palace, the Swaziland national council standing committee, a powerful band of royal advisors to the king, has been critical of Dlamini for not burying the National Development Strategy of his liberal predecessor, former prime minister Obed Dlamini, who now heads the illegal political party, the Ngwane National Congress. The development strategy was nearly launched by Mswati last month, but was cancelled at the eleventh hour, ostensibly to observe royal mourning over the death of one of King Sobhuza's wives. The development strategy notes that "Swaziland's dual system of government is a hindrance to economic progress," and implies royal advisors and the chieftaincy system must give way to a more elected government.

The king's advisors in the national council have condemned the report, particularly clauses calling for the re-establishment of statutory human rights removed by Sobhuza's Decree of 1973, as unnecessary in light of the work of the Constitutional Review Commission, which considers such matters.

Angered by the cancellation of a workshop by the prime minister, who blamed the parliamentary leadership of Botha Speaker Babbil Dlamini and Senate Speaker Fumud Mswati for not following procedures for such outings, MPs called for his historic vote of no-confidence. The motion was raised by MP Mareck Khumalo and seconded by MP Mofundo Ngobeni, a royal appointee to parliament. Khumalo has been an outspoken critic of the prime minister, whom he has blamed for his company's "loss of a national cellular phone contract to MTN.

Dlamini avoided the vote of no-confidence by promising to arrange another workshop for parliamentarians.

Mbabane faces bus blockade

MBABANE—The capital of Swaziland is bracing itself for a second public transport blockade in two months as tensions escalated in a dispute between bus and minibus taxis.

In late July Mbabane was shut down for almost an entire business day as traffic jammed into and out of the city, while drivers staged a protest in the city centre.

Police were helpless to counter the unprecedented city-wide blockade. Appeals by mayor Solomon Nxamalo and Transportation Minister Peter Dlamini, who has promised to attend to bus owners demands, led to a "temporary postponement" of the Mbabane bus blockade, according to the Swazi Commercial Anadoda Road Transport Association.

Last week the kingdom's second largest city, Manzini, was blocked and bus drivers have threatened another capital closure "without warning". Bus owners are demanding better regulation of minibus taxis, which have increased over the last two years.

"Kombis depart whenever they like, pose a danger at overcrowded bus ranks and steal bus passengers," said a spokesman for Mbabane bus operators, Hipol Dlamini. Since January buses on many routes have reduced their fares by 30% in an effort to win back customers.

Critics meetings between government officials and public transportation representatives on an almost daily basis have proved fruitless.
New Swazi bill proposes death for rapists who pass on HIV.

James Hall

MBABANE — Convicted rapists who infect their victims with the HIV virus will face death by hanging in Swaziland when the Public Health Bill is passed.

Also facing the hangman will be those convicted of indecent assault, sodomy and incest who infect victims with the virus that leads to AIDS.

The Human Rights Association of Swaziland is protesting against the bill and says that the kingdom is a signatory of a United Nations (UN) accord banning the death penalty.

However, the Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse, which spearheads awareness of rape and crime affecting Swazi women, supports the bill.

Death will apply whether the convicted rapist is aware of his own HIV status or not but the bill is silent about people who know they have AIDS and pass it on through consensual sex.

The UN Children’s Fund estimates one third of the Swazi population is infected with HIV. The ministry of health’s estimate is lower at 25%.

The last execution was in 1973, but Justice Minister Chief Mavuni Simelane announced its revival when he advertised in foreign publications last year for a hangman.
Swaziland sets out to woo foreign investment

Mbabane – Swaziland would woo badly needed foreign investment, the Investment Promotion Authority has said as it struggles to stimulate a sluggish economy in a country that is becoming poorer each year.

Last year the economy grew by 2.3 percent, lagging behind growth in population of 2.7 percent, according to the country’s central bank.

“We are trying to create an investment environment in which investors can feel safe and secure,” said Bheki Dlamini, the general manager of the Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority.

Foreign investment in 1997, the last year for which there are full figures, fell to $81 million from $110 million in 1996.

Dlamini said the government was trying to crack-down on crime in Swaziland, which, although not at the high levels that plague South Africa, is still regarded as a deterrent to potential investors.

He also said the government was investing in infrastructure, and had recently completed a new highway linking the capital Mbabane with Manzini, Swaziland’s biggest city.

Other initiatives included a bill before parliament to reduce corporate tax to 20 percent from 37.5 percent. “Reducing corporate tax to 20 percent will bring us more in line with tax rates in the region,” Dlamini said.

Companies that met a number of criteria, including “significant levels” of investment and that created jobs, might also enjoy a five-year tax holiday. “This tax holiday is discretionary. There are no hard rules regarding it, but we look at a number of factors and add them up,” he said.

Investors could also bring in their required capital equipment and raw materials duty free.

Unemployment stood at about 40 percent, he said, and would probably rise as thousands of Swazis working in South African gold mines faced retrenchment in the wake of falling bullion prices.

“One of our key objectives is to create employment, so we want to encourage investment in labour-intensive industries,” Dlamini said.

Dlamini said the government was targeting manufacturing and textiles as key sectors it wished to promote to alleviate joblessness.

He said the focus was also on tourism. “Swaziland is ... steeped in traditional culture and we are trying to market this.” - Reuters
Young Swazi activists took the boat...
Illegal mining defies tradition

Desperation brings change for many Swazis

James Hall

MBABANE — A “village” of diamond scavengers which sprang up around the Dvokolwako diamond mine has grown so fast that it is now the largest informal settlement in Swaziland’s northeastern Hhohho region.

Its residents are illegally reviving the moribund gemstone mining sector in defiance of government, police and traditional authorities. In addition, hundreds of SA prospectors have joined the Swazis digging to extract precious stones.

In a nation where unemployment runs at 45%, entire families now live in the inverted earthen pyramid where opencast mining was carried out until three years ago. Waiting nearby are “agents” from SA who purchase the gems.

No formal gem or precious metal mining is currently done in Swaziland. Citing declining gold prices, the Canadian firm Southern Era closed its Swazi operations last month.

The Dvokolwako mine was closed in 1996 when the opencast system brought diminishing returns.

Commissioner of mines Aaron Vilakazi, who advises King Mswati on the granting of mining licences, feels the mine is still viable if an investor reopen it as a small or medium operation with reduced overheads.

But the mine’s infrastructure is being destroyed by squatters defiling structures to get building materials. Government’s response has been to send two policemen to disperse the prospectors. Outnumbered one thousand to one, they were chased away by squatters.

All minerals in Swaziland are legally owned by the king, who holds them in trust for the Swazi nation. The scavengers’ village at Dvokolwako has shocked traditional authorities who believe its residents are stealing from the king.

Natural Resources and Energy Minister Prince Gudura has since promised parliament the army will close the Dvokolwako settlement, and put an end to illegal scavenging, but no soldiers have appeared to interrupt the round-the-clock operations of hopeful diamond seekers.

At the mine children play and adults laugh and banter while they toil. When reminded that the diamonds she hopes to find with a pick axe belong to her king, Winnie Glinindza replies, “We love and respect our king, but we are starving.”
Swaziland launches development plan

MBABANE — The Swazi government's national development strategy, a blueprint of social and economic goals to guide the kingdom over the next quarter century, was launched by King Mswati on Friday.

Begun under the administration of Prime Minister Obed Dlamini seven years ago, the policy recommendations were assembled from submissions by grassroots organisations, employers and labour bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and church groups.

Many of the development strategy's recommendations have already been translated into legislation, or are being executed through existing programmes.

Sections of the development strategy calling for political reforms have been marginalised because government feels they precipitate the work under way by the Constitutional Review Commission.

While the commission assembles its draft constitution, the development strategy's call for a "universally accepted bill of rights" has been deleted from the official document.

Stakeholders who contributed to the strategy protested the exclusion of political sections at a meeting before the launch. Musa Hlope, executive director of the Swaziland Federation of Employers, urged an audience with the king to press for incorporation of the development strategy into the constitutional commission's draft constitution.

Jan Sihole, secretary-general of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, another contributor to the strategy, said the federation would dissociate itself from the document if political sections are sidelined.

The development strategy seeks to lessen Swaziland's economic dependence on SA, reduce the kingdom's 45% unemployment rate, improve education and health care, empower women, reform the public service and tackle the AIDS epidemic that threatens to frustrate all attempts at nation-building.

...The plan calls for government to rely more on NGOs to increase the supply of drinking water to a targeted 60% of Swazis, and extend sanitation to 75% of the population.

The nation's school curriculum is to be reoriented toward the teaching of technical and vocational skills "required for the marketplace".

A devolution of governing powers from a centralised bureaucracy in Mbabane to local authorities is recommended, especially to facilitate urban development by giving municipalities freer rein to meet the housing shortage.

Claiming that the quality of Swaziland agricultural products is superior to that of neighbouring countries, the strategy calls for increased agricultural productivity. This is to be achieved in part by the commercialisation of peasant farms on under-utilised Swazi national land.

The strategy recognises the primacy of agriculture in Swaziland's economy, but calls for economic diversification through industrialisation.
Swaziland to end telecoms monopoly

Post and Telecommunications pending

James Hall

MBABANE — The dismantling of Swaziland's telecommunications monopoly will go into effect with the pending passage of the 'Post and Telecommunications Act, signalling a major step towards the government's goal of privatising public enterprises.

Tourism, Communication and Environmental Affairs Minister George Vilakati predicts swift passage for the legislation. Recently, Vilakati split the Swaziland Post and Telecommunications Corporation into its postal and telecommunications divisions which operate separately.

A monopoly since its inception, Swaziland's phone company is a stakeholder in cellphone company MTN Swaziland, which began operations late last year.

Phone users have long complained of insufficient service, and international callers were not alerted to the new numbering prefixes in January this year, leading to the kingdom's virtual disappearance from the world's telecommunications system.

However, it was government's pursuit of national development strategy goals which precipitated the move to split the company, and not consumer complaints, Vilakati said.

The Swaziland Water Board, in turn, will soon lose its monopoly over water distribution, according to Housing and Urban Development Minister Stella Lukhlele. Lukhlele says the call for the end of monopolistic public enterprises the world over has proven irresistible.

The Swaziland Royal Insurance Company will also lose its monopoly once parliament passes the Insurance and Pensions Bill, expected later this year.

The Swaziland Dairy Board made its first move toward privatisation when it separated its commercial operations from its regulatory and dairy development sectors. Dairy Board general manager Nicholas Gumede said the move became effective on August 1. At present, the royal conglomerate Tshosi TakaNgwane owns 35% of it, in partnership with an Italian firm, Parmalat, which owns a 65% stake.

The dairy board's commercial operations at the Matsapha Industrial Site, which manufacture and distribute a line of dairy products, also seem set for privatisation. In anticipation of this, the regulatory and development functions of the board, including the dairy product formulation and appraisal department, the dairy industry information and the artificial insemination departments have moved to new offices in Manzini.

Meanwhile, in an overture to the eventual privatisation of operation of border post facilities, the customs and excise department has contracted out cleaning and maintenance jobs at all border posts. The more efficient management of border posts will permit a long-desired extension of operating hours, which has thus far been considered too costly, particularly at the Os- hoek post which handles most traffic from SA to Swaziland, according to a customs official.
Prefential markets 'vital for Swaziland'

Mbabane — The retention of preferential markets for Swaziland is vital for its steadily increasing sugar harvest, according to the head of the Swaziland Sugar Association.

Swaziland was near the end of a crushing season that was expected to produce 529,000 tons of sugar compared to last season's 475,000 tons, on the back of good weather and an increased production area, association CEO Mike Matesbula said.

The low world sugar price is not a serious problem for Swaziland at the moment because our earnings are not too diluted by the relatively small amount we sell into the world market," Matesbula said at a ministerial conference of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) grouping.

He said Swaziland would sell 190,000 tons into preferential markets and 260,000 tons into the four-nation Southern African Customs Union (SACU) market, where the price is higher than the world price, which has been pressured by a sugar glut.

The remaining 79,000 tons of expected production would be sold on the world market.

He also said Swaziland was expecting an increase in production for the next season.

Swaziland is hosting a meeting of 17 sugar-producing ACP countries that will formulate a joint stance ahead of a final session of talks in November to renegotiate the Lomé convention under which the European Union (EU) imports 1,304,500 million tons of raw sugar at about triple the world price.

Delegates have said the relationship between the EU and ACP countries could come under pressure from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) millennium-round meeting in Seattle in November.

The ACP countries have expressed concern that changes to the Lomé convention and its sugar protocol as well as a special preferential sugar agreement, due to expire in 2001, could affect their sugar industries.

Matesbula said Swaziland would push hard for an extension of the protocol to protect the sugar industry that provides one in five jobs in the kingdom of a million people and generates about 20% of the country's foreign exchange earnings.

"As long as distortions exist in world sugar, we want our access to preferential markets," he said relations with SA, also a sugar producer, had eased since the signing of an agreement early last year that gave fairer access to each country to export their sugar into the SACU and obliged each country to export surplus into the world sugar market.

Matesbula said the two countries were working closely together in negotiating a sugar protocol for the 14-nation Southern African Development Community to limit the fallout from non-SACU members Zimbabwe and Malawi selling their sugar into that market.

Swaziland is one of the world's lowest cost producers of sugar and is planning to bring another 16,000ha of land under irrigation with water from the yet-to-be-completed Magotha Dam project. Most of that land would be given to small-scale sugar farmers.

Swaziland's sugar exports under a preferential agreement to the US should not be affected by WTO talks, Matesbula said.

"The US is committed to imports of 1.3 million tons and our share is about 20,000 tons.

"That is not expected to change," he said.

Swazi wants to keep sugar-coated access

Mbabane — The retention of preferential markets for Swaziland is vital for its steadily increasing sugar harvest, the head of the Swaziland Sugar Association said in an interview yesterday.

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The remaining 79,000 tons of expected production would be sold on the world market.

"We are looking to an increase in production next season," he added.

Swaziland is hosting a meeting of 17 sugar-producing ACP countries that will formulate a joint stance ahead of a final session of talks in November to renegotiate the Lomé convention under which the European Union (EU) imports more than 1.3 million tons of raw sugar at about three times the world price.

The ACP has expressed concern that changes to the Lomé convention and its sugar protocol, as well as a special preferential sugar agreement expiring in 2001, could hurt their sugar industries.

Matesbula said Swaziland would push hard for an extension of the protocol to protect its sugar industry which provides one in five jobs and generates about 20% of foreign exchange.

— Reuters
Swazi Senate approves labour bill

James Hall

MBABANE — The Swazi Senate approved the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill on Friday, easing labour-government tension and reducing the threat of sanctions proposed by international labour organisations.

The bill’s passage was testimony to the persistence of Labour Minister Litfo Dlamini, who argued against amendments proposed by conservative senators that would, he said, "deprive workers of their right to go on a legal strike".

Senators had demanded the inclusion to enable a labour minister to declare a proposed strike illegal if there is a threat of property damage. The clause forbids strikes that pose a threat to lives and public safety.

Dlamini argued that if during the course of a strike property were to be damaged it would be due to the lawlessness of individuals. To forbid a strike because of potential for vandalism would effectively outlaw all strikes.

The minister also predicted the international community would reject any labour legislation that included such a provision. "Let us ask ourselves why the world did not accept the 1996 Industrial Relations Act," he said.

The law, which the amended legislation replaces, was condemned as a violation of human rights as it criminalised certain strike activity.

Government’s lack of urgency about the labour legislation’s passage, as alleged by the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, led the International Labour Organisation to urge the American labour umbrella body, the AFL-CIO, to press the US Congress to drop Swaziland from the generalised system of preferences. That scheme allows Swazi goods to enter US markets duty free.
Pension money to stay in SA

James Hall 8/10/99

MBABANE — Public Service Pension Fund CEO Ratna Ratnarajah has turned down calls for Swazi pension money to be repatriated to Swaziland, saying the nearly R1bn in pension funds will remain in SA investments.

He said about R83bn in Swazi pension money was enjoying “high rates of investment returns” in SA.

Parliamentarians have recently urged the CEO to “do what is right by Swaziland and bring our money home to bolster local financial institutions”.

They specifically want to see such funds injected into the undercapitalised Swaziland Stock Market, according to House of Assembly member Frank Sifiso Dlamini.

Dlamini, also an agent with the Swaziland Royal Insurance Corporation, which contributes to the pension institution, has been at the forefront of calls to localise pension funds.

“Our money is helping SA citizens to build modern houses, yet the owners of these funds are living in houses made of sticks and mud,” said Dlamini.

Ratnarajah’s comments may also have been in response to a long-anticipated Securities Act expected to be tabled by the finance ministry.

The proposed law will require Swazi pension funds to invest a percentage of their capital locally. The law is devised to secure capitalisation for a proposed Swaziland Stock Exchange, to be supervised by the Central Bank of Swaziland.

Ratnarajah complained of a lack of investment opportunities in Swaziland.

“In this context, the repatriation of our funds from SA to Swaziland would cause untold problems due to a lack of suitable local investments to accommodate these funds.”

Income generated from SA investments, he said, “assists the government of Swaziland in funding the cost of pensions and death benefits to public servants”.

Ratnarajah said pension fund investment income is not taxed in SA, and that negotiations with the SA government were being undertaken in order to “formalise” this arrangement.
Swaziland's banks have money to lend, but small businesses are out of luck. Loans extended to the private sector have hovered at the R1bn level on a quarterly basis since 1997, but big corporations are the prime beneficiaries.

"Banks continue to be conservative in their lending strategy to small borrowers," says a central bank source. "Corporate demand is fully met."

Local banks deny there is a deliberate strategy of exclusion, but one financial analyst candidly expressed a popular sentiment in the banking sector: "Swazis do not repay loans."

This attitude was reinforced by the recent near insolvency of the Swazi Development Bank. Its board made political decisions to extend multimillion-rand loans to government authorities and members of the royal family. These loans went largely unserviced and government initiated a R60m bail-out, drawing on its deposits in the banking system. Currently, government's banking deposits stand at only R14m, says the central bank.

Though credit extended to the private sector last quarter totalled R119m, down R55.9m or 4.8% from the previous quarter, money is on hand for loans. Total domestic deposits were up by 5% last quarter and business deposits rose 31.2% last year, along with a 17.5% rise in individual deposits.

In May, following SA's lead, the central bank discount rate was lowered to 15% and since July it has stood at 14%. It would be good news for small borrowers — if only they could secure loans.
Report highlights Swaziland's woes

Growth rate indicates lower living standards

James Hall

MBABANE — Lower foreign direct investment, persistent unemployment and the effect of a declining rand on Swaziland's recessionary economy characterize the kingdom's performance over the past year, says the Central Bank of Swaziland.

The economy's anemic 2.3% growth rate last year was off from the 3.7% achieved in 1997, says the bank's annual report. Set against a population growth rate of 2.7%, the economy's performance implies further worsening of Swazi living standards.

The bank wistfully recalls the days a decade ago when double-digit annual growth resulted from foreign firms fleeing apartheid SA for sanctions-free Swaziland. In contrast, private investment growth in Swaziland last year was 0.2% and foreign direct investment totalled R202.9m.

The expansion of existing factories and the establishment of the Swaziland Investment Development Corporation, which has approved 13 projects valued at R74.7m, are two optimistic notes.

Continuing the trend of recent years, the government experienced "rapid increases in expenditure, unmatched by increases in revenue", leading to inevitable deficits.

"The emphasis must be on a fiscal policy that scales back on public sector jobs ... given the potential of the recent deficits to undermine Swaziland's macroeconomic balances."

The bank called again for the government to find a way to replace Southern African Customs Union revenue, which makes up 50.4% of government revenue but is to be rescheduled.

Swaziland's bilateral trade with SA saw a worsening trade deficit for the former last year, although the current account balance of R973.5m was reduced from the previous year's R981.3m.

Because SA is the chief buyer of Swaziland's manufactured goods, SA's own struggling economic performance is expected to have an adverse effect on manufacturing growth. Some growth is expected this year in other foreign markets, especially for sugar-based edible concentrates, paper products, textile products and sweets.

Manufacturing remains the main engine of Swazi economic growth, contributing 38% of gross domestic product (GDP). After expanding the previous year, the agricultural sector contracted from 10.8% in 1997 to 9.8% of GDP last year. A sharp decline in maize production was to blame.

Sugar production declined a mild 0.3%, but is expected to pick up this year. Export volumes for wood pulp, by contrast, rose 50.4% to 256,549 tons and export receipts rose 13.9%.

Mining's contribution to GDP fell to 1.4%, but industry receipts were up 20.1% last year to R120.2m. The chief mineral money earner was asbestos.

The tourism sector's contribution to GDP rose to 10.3% from 1997's 9.9%, indicating that the government and private sector's increased efforts to lure visitors are paying off.
Parmalat in Swazi joint venture

James Hall

MBABANE - Italian dairy giant Parmalat entered a R4.2bn joint venture this week with a consortium of Swazi dairy farmers and the local conglomerate Turbo Takalane to buy the commercial operations of the Swaziland Dairy Board.

The privatisation deal is in keeping with government's goal of shedding its business enterprises into a new company, to be called Parmalat Swaziland.

Parmalat will own 60% of the Matsapha-based dairy goods manufacturer, with 25% held by Turbo Takalane and 15% by government, on behalf of dairy farmers.

At the signing of the deal, handing over the dairy plant to Parmalat Swaziland, Agriculture Minister Roy Panourakis said the event represented another step for His Majesty's government area of the private sector in the driver's seat in economic development, while ensuring indigenous people participate on an equal footing.

Swaziland's per capita consumption of 581 litres of milk a year is the highest of any Southern African Development Community states. An annual 53 million litres of demand for dairy products consistently outstrips domestic supply, of 36.2 million litres. The rest is imported from South Africa, but imports now account for 40% of the formal milk market, and have increased 23% in the past decade. During that time, self-sufficiency in milk production has dropped from 78% to 68% as supplies of dairy goods, though increasing 2% annually, have failed to keep pace with a 3% annual increase in demand.

"Milk supply and demand projections show a gloomy picture in the next 10 years without a real effort to promote domestic production," said Panourakis.

The minister also announced a government gazette abolishing price controls in the industry.

PP 13/11/99 (SIA)
EU withdraws from 'neverending' exercise

MBABANE — The European Union (EU) has withdrawn its financial support from King Mswati's constitutional review commission, a controversial body which is supposed to be canvassing views on political change in Swaziland.

It is believed that as much as R20m in funding may have been lost to the commission because commission chairman Mangaliso Dlamini has refused to implement EU recommendations to make the constitution drafting process more transparent, democratic and financially accountable.

Dlamini said he was unconcerned about the EU pullout. "We are expecting the money to come from government because we are a national project," he said.

An EU team of advisors assessed the commission's operations earlier this year, and recommended several posts — which the union would pay for — including a media advisor to improve the commission's abysmal press relations. Dlamini has barred the press from the commission's proceedings.

The king and Prime Minister Sibusiso Dlamini routinely refer questions about political reform in the kingdom to the commission, saying only through this process will change be realised.

Labour unions, outlawed political parties and human rights organisations have condemned the commission as undemocratic, and an attempt by the palace to manipulate political change.

Sources say the EU, and increasingly the two remaining major foreign funders of the commission, the UK and Taiwan, are growing wary of the neverending exercise.

The Times of Swaziland has become the first media organ to call for the abolition of the constitutional commission. "We should start afresh," the newspaper said.
WTO may cause Swazi sugar blues

James Hall

MBABANE — Swaziland’s economy faces potentially disastrous repercussions if the World Trade Organisation (WTO) brings an end to preferential trade agreements for the kingdom’s chief export, sugar.

On the agenda of WTO delegates currently meeting in Seattle is the cessation of such deals as those guaranteeing a quota for Swazi sugar in the European Union (EU), US and other markets.

Swaziland’s trade representatives will lobby the WTO for an extension of the sugar protocol and special preferential sugar agreement.

Last year, sugar export volumes were down 2.4% due to a decreasing share of the regional market, but export revenues rose 6.2% to R616.5m on the previous year’s figure. The appeal to importers of cheaper Swazi sugar — because of the declining value of the rand, to which the Swazi currency, the lilangeni, is linked — offset damage caused by a drop in world sugar prices. Domestic sales increased 14% last year to 280 000 tons, says the Swaziland Sugar Association.

Swaziland’s EU sugar quota was brokered under the Lomé Convention — the EU’s treaty with 71 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) nations — while its US deal falls under that country’s generalised system of preferences. Current quotas for Swazi sugar are 120 000 tons for Lomé and 20 000 tons for the US.

Swaziland sells 17 000 tons within the Southern African Customs Union which is made up of SA, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia.

A 12-nation alliance of sugar producing nations will lobby the WTO to forbid renewal of these agreements, which are now expiring, and subject them to renegotiation. Preferential agreements are being increasingly challenged in the WTO.

Sugar industry officials see a detrimental ripple effect should preferential trade status be removed for the product: a loss of foreign exchange earnings, leading to exacerbated balance of payment problems and loss of profit.

Swaziland is betting heavily on the continued good performance of its sugar sector. King Mswati is encouraging small cane growing co-operatives as an answer to unemployment.

While hopeful of a favourable transitional WTO deal, Alan Mkhouta, administrative manager at the Swaziland Sugar Association, says: “The bottom line is that in a setting of globalisation Swaziland will increasingly have to sell its sugar on the world market.”
New body to tackle Swazi tourism flaws

James Hall

MBABANE — A long-awaited Swaziland Tourism Authority has been established in draft legislation unveiled by Tourism Minister George Vilakati.

Parliament will consider the bill when legislators reconvene next month, following a recess.

The authority will add coherence to the kingdom's efforts to boost its tourism sector.

A National Development Plan launched in September targets tourism as a key growth area for employment and government revenues. Industry receipts are up slightly this year, nearly reaching R200m.

The Central Bank of Swaziland ascribes the improvement to the proliferation of small lodges and guest houses that provide cheaper, more varied alternatives to the main tourist complexes of the Ezulwini Valley, Pigg's Peak and Nhlangano.

Game park revenues have increased, because of the opening of a luxury lodge at Millwane Nature Reserve. The bank has also pointed to a spill-over benefit as more tourists visit the kingdom as a side trip to their primary regional destination, usually SA.

Yet a lack of co-ordination between government agencies has hobbled the industry's efforts to lure more tourists. Some border posts close as early as 4pm, restricting traffic flow.

To deal with such problems, a national tourism advisory council will be assembled by the tourism minister from industry players like hotels, tour operators, game parks and travel agencies, along with environmentalists and representatives of cultural and artists' groups.

The council will provide policy recommendations to the minister and the tourism authority, whose nine-member board will also include a cross-section of tourism industry professionals.

Vilakati, considered one of the most dynamic holders of the tourism portfolio to date, is confident the tourism authority will end ad hoc efforts to lure visitors to what former US president Jimmy Carter has recently described as "one of the most beautiful countries I've seen".