



Golden Christmas tree sells in Tokyo

TOKYO: A dazzling \$1.8m (R26m) gold, 19kg Christmas tree went on sale at a jewellery store yesterday. Decorated with gold wire and 2m high at the Ginza Tanaka store, Japan, manager Takahiro Oto said: "A bright and shiny future like gold wipes out gloomy news." – Reuters



Sweden extends bird flu alert to Denmark

STOCKHOLM: Sweden has raised the alert level for poultry to the second highest following an outbreak of bird flu in neighbouring Denmark. The Swedish board of agriculture raised the level to two on a scale of three, meaning poultry must be kept indoors. – Reuters



Media fined for 'false' fish sauce reports

HANOI: Vietnam yesterday fined news outlets for publishing reports about toxic fish sauce, accusing them of sparking public panic over the staple condiment. The sauce is consumed daily by most of the country's 93 million people. – AFP

Foundation donates to school, churches

KGOMOTSO SETHUSA

CHRISTMAS came early for the community of Umlazi as the Motsepe Foundation extended its generosity with donations for schools and churches.

Foundation chairperson Patrice Motsepe, handed out eight cheques worth R75 000 each at St Augustine Catholic church in the township yesterday.

The businessman philanthropist was accompanied by his wife and foundation CEO Dr Precious Motsepe.

"As the Motsepe Foundation, we acknowledge that we are what we are because of the communities and the nation. There are, of course, challenges we face as a nation, but if we uplift and help the poor, we have a future as a nation," he said.

"Education is key for young people to better themselves and live a better life. The partnership with the education department is part of a broader commitment we have.

"Also, the role of religion and the church is absolutely important."

Motsepe acknowledged that some of

the foundation's projects will not be as successful as others.

"We are satisfied with the progress made thus far. We are happy to make a contribution towards the improvement of the lives of our people," he said.

School heads and pastors expressed appreciation to the foundation and pledged to do more with the donations to improve the conditions at schools and the churches within the community.

"We have already planned to refurbish our science laboratory and improve our facilities so that our pupils can have education," Umlazi High School principal Senzo Dumakude, said.

A total of R1.2m was divided among Umlazi High, KwaMashu Christian Centre, St Augustine Anglican Church, Ogwini Methodist Church of SA, Oasis Fellowship Church, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Thamele Primary and Fortress of Hope International.

The foundation will also be checking on whether the donations are having an impact in terms of poverty alleviation and improvement of lives.

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DEATH TOLL GROWS: Another three people succumbed to accidents on the province's roads even as commemoration ceremonies were held to remember those who have died.

More road deaths as lives remembered

Three commuters were killed while many others were injured

LESLEY TSHAMANO

LESS than 24 hours after transport, community safety and liaison MEC Mxolisi Kaunda presided over a day of remembrance for those who died on KZN roads on Sunday, three more people died in road accidents yesterday in the province.

Two people were killed and several others sustained moderate to minor injuries after their taxi crashed into a tree in Ballito yesterday morning.

Members of Reaction Unit South Africa (Rusa) and other emergency services responded to the crash after receiving calls from the public.

On arrival, they found two people had died on scene.

"Several other passengers suffered mild to moderate injuries and were treated on scene by various private ambulance services before being trans-

ported to hospital," Rusa said.

The cause of the accident is unknown.

In another incident, a woman was killed and several others were seriously injured following a collision involving two cars at Verulam, north of Durban on Sunday evening.

The crash included a Toyota Corolla and a BMW.

"One occupant of the Toyota Corolla was killed on impact. Two others a woman and a baby, who were also in the vehicle, were seriously injured in the side impact collision," Rusa said.

"The occupants of the BMW suffered moderate injuries."

It is believed that the Toyota Corolla was travelling from Tongaat and was turning into Canelands when the BMW, travelling from Verulam towards Tongaat collided into it.

The injured were stabilised before being transported to hospital.

A further six people were injured when two cars collided in Pietermaritzburg on Sunday night.

ER24 paramedics and other emergency services responded to the accident.

"Upon assessment of the patients, which included three youngsters believed to be between the ages of 19 and 21, it was found that they sustained injuries ranging from minor to moderate," ER24 spokesperson Chitra Bodasing Harduth said. "The patients were treated and transported to hospital for further medical care."

Harduth said the cause of the accident is unknown.

At the remembrance day ceremony in Pinetown on Sunday, Kaunda, had urged motorists and passengers to be more mindful of traffic rules and their own safety.

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GENEROUS DONATIONS: Motsepe Foundation boss Patrice Motsepe and his wife, Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, in Umlazi yesterday.

Edge session gets down to business

NOKUTHULA NTULI

TO AFFIRM its commitment to support the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector, eThekweni municipality will today host an economic development and growth seminar in eThekweni (Edge) session on micro finance at the Moses Mabhida stadium.

"SMEs are vital drivers of economic growth, with this sector recognised globally for its role in creating employment opportunities and helping to alleviate poverty," eThekweni's spokesperson Tozi Mthethwa said.

Renowned international speaker and economics professor at Juraj Dobrila University in Croatia, Dr Milford Bateman, is to deliver an address on strategies that

assist sustainable approaches to micro-funding for SMEs.

This will then allow us as the city leadership, with relevant stakeholders, to engage in innovative approaches that will provide more sustainable financial solutions for small, micro and medium enterprises

He will also share his international expertise on workable procedures to support and fund small and micro businesses.

eThekweni mayor Zandile Gumede said the government fully recognised the role of SMEs in growing the economy of the city.

"Even as we pledge our support to further develop this sector, we acknowledge that there are challenges faced in this sector which still inhibit its growth and sustainability," Gumede said.

The seminar will enable the city and other stakeholders to review the current status on micro finance and financial support given to micro businesses, she said.

"This will allow us, as the city leadership, together with the relevant stakeholders, to engage in innovative approaches that will provide more sustainable financial solutions for small, micro and medium enterprises," she said.

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Budget cuts hurt Ezemvelo body

SIHLE MAVUSO

THE drastic budget cuts announced in March this year by the national Treasury continue to impact on Ezemvelo, the province's leading nature conservation agency.

In March this year, the provincial department of economic development, tourism and environmental affairs, which Ezemvelo falls under, announced that the entity's budget would be cut by half a billion rands in three years.

Comfort Ngidi, the outgoing chairperson of the board of Ezemvelo, said the cutbacks had forced Ezemvelo "to look at other ways of raising much-needed revenue" for their day-to-day operations and core activities of nature conservation and eco-tourism.

"The recent budget cuts continue to affect our operations. However, I am



BUDGET CUTS BITE: Ezemvelo CEO Dr David Mabunda.

confident that we will pull through these difficult times and survive as we are looking at commercialising some of our services in order to make money," he said.

Ngidi said he had faith that Ezemvelo's executive was capable of keeping "the ship afloat" during the difficult times.

"I trust that the CEO will work hard to ensure that Ezemvelo continues to be sustainable," he said.

Earlier this year Dr David Mabunda, the entity's CEO, said they were working on a long-term plan to cut down on costs without compromising their work and working on revenue streams through their game reserves.

Among the envisaged steps would be using leased cars instead of buying them. One of the biggest costs they had incurred had been on maintaining their fleet of more than 100 cars to serve the myriad game reserves under Ezemvelo, including the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park.

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GETTING FAIRER: Santaco has taken heed of Minister Dipuo Peters' call to increase the input of women in the taxi industry with the launch of the council's women's desk.

Taxi industry ups women's participation

TNA REPORTER

THE South African National Taxi Council has taken heed of concerns raised by the Transport Minister, Dipuo Peters, about lack of women in the taxi industry, especially in management positions.

Santaco president Phillip Taai-bosch speaking at a National World Remembrance Day commemoration in KwaDangezi said they had taken the minister's concerns to heart.

"We now have women on board at top management level and today I am glad to have the company of the national chairperson of Santaco women's desk, Dudu Nkwanyana, on this wonderful day as we are remembering millions of people who died in road crashes," Taai-bosch said.

Maphumulo said the industry was

in need of women since they were vocal and influential on critical matters.

Nkwanyana said: "The aim of this desk is to dilute the taxi industry by having both men and women at management level.

"We hope to contribute to the growth and image of this industry.

"We would also love to see this industry being more professional, with fewer fights and disagreements."

Maphumulo said women had a lot to offer to help minimise crashes on the roads.

"Women can contribute by praying and educating young people about the importance of road safety and reminding them that they are the future of this country."

Transport, safety and community

liaison MEC Mxolisi Kaunda said his department supported the call for women to be in top management.

"Women empowerment is critical and young people also need to be involved and empowered, we hope that with women now on board in our taxi industry this will decrease the number of crashes on our roads.

"At least 1.2 million people have died on our roads. Road deaths and injuries are sad since they claim the lives of young people who are supposed to be future leaders.

"Let us continue to preach the gospel of road safety," Kaunda said.

The Santaco KZN women's desk will hold its second conference from Wednesday to Friday at the Coastlands Hotel, Pietermaritzburg.

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