

Watsons charge Agrizzi for theft; Tencent pulls down Naspers; Kolisi effect boosts Spar

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Jared Watson, the nephew of former Bosasa CEO, Gavin Watson has laid a criminal complaint against whistleblower Angelo Agrizzi for the theft of R35 million. Watson claims the money went missing while Agrizzi was working for Bosasa, which is now called African Global Operations. Gavin Watson was killed in a car accident two months ago. It follows after Agrizzi testified at the Zondo Commission that Bosasa paid bribes to government officials in exchange for tenders. Eyewitness News reports that Agrizzi has described the criminal charges as a distraction and said he was not done dishing dirt on Bosasa and that he wanted to cross-examine the Watson family.

With South African Airways workers vowing to ground flights to a halt with a “mother of all strikes” as they face the prospect of almost a 1,000 workers that could lose their jobs; the airline has warned that there may be no recovery if the strike goes ahead. Acting CEO Zuks Ramasia warned that the strike would exacerbate rather than ameliorate the airline’s problem and will result in a set of circumstances from which there may well be no recovery. Staff including cabin and check-in, tickets sales, head office, technical and ground staff will join the walkouts; the South African Cabin Crew Association and the National Union of Metal workers said in a statement. They have warned that there were likely be disruptions and have advised fliers to make alternative arrangements if they have booked flights on SAA.

South Africa’s Post Office is another state-owned company that has detailed plans to lay off workers as the government looks to slash its wage bill. It is cutting several hundreds of jobs and will pay voluntary severance packages to about 776 employees at the end of November, as part of a phased reorganisation. Labour unions are however arguing that their members should not have to contend with the fallout of years of mismanagement and alleged corruption at state companies. The Public Servants Association which represents 240 000 state workers, have called for urgent talks on plans to reduce the state wage bill. Meanwhile, the two biggest unions at Eskom have threatened to stage demonstrations and strikes against plans to split the company into three units.

Tencent Holdings has posted quarterly earnings that missed the lowest analyst’s estimates after a weakening Chinese economy hurt advertising revenue. Net income fell 13% in the September quarter, well below the 23.5 billion yuan average of estimates. The Chinese social media and entertainment giant reported a 90% drop in one-time gains – an item that tracks its vast portfolio of start-ups around the world – after swallowing charges for investments in connected automobiles. Shares in Prosus, which groups largest shareholder Naspers internet holdings, fell as much as 4%. Naspers shares fell almost 3% by early Wednesday afternoon, on the JSE ending 2.69% by the end of trade yesterday afternoon.

South Africa’s rugby win has given a boost to the country’s supermarkets. That is according to the Chief Executive Officer of the Spar Group, Graham O’Connor said the sight of Springbok Rugby Captain Siya Kolisi lifting the World Cup has sparked a renewed rush to the shops. O’Connor says the positive effect could ripple through the next six months of trading. Spar has almost 2,350 stores across Southern Africa and the retailer’s outlook is “pretty positive” after discounts and store upgrades boost overall profit in the year through September, the CEO said. Spar shares climbed by as much as 7.2% in Johannesburg after the company announced full-year earnings, the most in almost four years. Southern African sales of food and liquor rose by 8.1% for the full year.