



▲His Excellency Eng. Waleed bin Abdulkarim El Kheraji, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shaking hands with His Majesty King Mswati III at Lozitha Royal Palace.

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Government
refutes hunger
strike claims by
US legal firm

By EDN Reporter

THE Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini has dismissed claims made by a United States-based legal firm alleging that one of the third-country nationals currently in Eswatini was on a hunger strike. In a statement issued on Wednesday, Acting Government Spokesperson Thabile Mdluli clarified that following the press release by the US legal firm, government immediately dispatched a verification team to assess the situation.

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By EDN Reporter

Govt refutes hunger strike claims by US legal firm

THE Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini has dismissed claims made by a United States-based legal firm alleging that one of the third-country nationals currently in Eswatini was on a hunger strike.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Acting Government Spokesperson Thabile Mdluli clarified that following the press release by the US legal firm, government immediately dispatched a verification team to assess the situation.

She said that upon investigation, officials found the concerned individual to be in good health and spirits.

“The third-country national was found to be in good health and spirits. He did, however, mention that he was currently fasting and praying because he was missing his family. He is currently taking liquids as part of his fasting process,” said Mdluli.

According to the government, the individual also confirmed that he was in regular communication with his family and remains in contact with his US-based lawyers.

“The third-country national expressed that he is in constant contact with his family and is able to communicate with his US lawyers,” Mdluli added.

The government further assured the nation and the international community that all third-country nationals in Eswatini are being well cared for, with access to both physical and psychosocial support services, including counselling.

“They are also provided with comprehensive healthcare to ensure their physical

well-being,” read part of the statement.

Mdluli reiterated that Eswatini remains committed to upholding freedom of religion as a fundamental human right, allowing all individuals within its borders, including third-country nationals, to freely engage in worship, prayer, and spiritual practices.

“The Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini upholds freedom of religion as a fundamental human right; hence, the third-country nationals are allowed to practice their faith through worship, prayer, and spiritual guidance,” she said.

However, Mdluli emphasised that while government respects and supports the individual’s right to observe religious fasting, health and safety considerations remain paramount.

“The government has no intention to interfere with the third-country national’s religious practices. However, he will be monitored to ensure that his prayer and fasting do not affect his health,” Mdluli explained.

Mdluli concluded by reaffirming Eswatini’s commitment to maintaining humanitarian standards and ensuring the welfare of all persons under its care, in line with both national laws and international human rights obligations.

“The Government wishes to assure the Nation and all concerned parties that the third-country nationals are in good hands. Their health, safety, and well-being remain our top priority,” she added.



▲ Acting Government Spokesperson Thabile Mdluli.

King commends Eswatini–Germany partnership

‘Collaboration has advanced the kingdom’s development’

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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HIS Majesty King Mswati III has expressed profound appreciation for the enduring partnership between Eswatini and Germany, highlighting the substantial benefits this collaboration has brought to the kingdom’s development.

Speaking through His Royal Highness Prince Guduza, who represented the King at the German Day of Unity celebration on October 22, 2025, at the Summerfield Botanical Garden, His Majesty underscored the pivotal role the bilateral relationship has played in advancing key sectors such as education, access to clean water, and cultural development.

The event, hosted by His Excellency Andreas Peschke, the German Ambassador to Eswatini, served as a vibrant platform to celebrate the longstanding and fruitful ties between the two nations.

It provided an opportunity to reflect on the successes of joint initiatives and reaffirm the commitment to continued cooperation for mutual benefit.

In his address, HRH Prince Guduza conveyed the King’s commendation of the robust relations that have flourished over the years.

“The collaboration between our nations has proven invaluable, particularly in education, access to clean water, the arts and other areas pivotal to our development,” he remarked.

This encapsulates the depth and breadth of the partnership, which has transcended



diplomatic formalities to deliver tangible improvements in the lives of Eswatini’s citizens.

One of the flagship projects exemplifying this cooperation is the Lomahasha-Namaacha Cross-border Water Supply Project. Supported by Germany’s Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), or Reconstruction Loan Corporation, this initiative is implemented through the South African Development Bank and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Scheduled to run from 2024 to 2026, the project aims to significantly enhance water access in the border region between Eswatini and Mozambique. The Lomahasha-Namaacha project seeks to improve water infrastructure and ensure a sustainable supply of clean water.

Saudi Arabia's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs in one-day working visit to Eswatini

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Kingdom of Eswatini on Wednesday hosted His Excellency Eng. Waleed bin Abdulkarim El Kheraji, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on a one-day working visit aimed at strengthening bilateral relations between the two monarchies.

The Saudi diplomat arrived at King Mswati III International Airport at 11:45 a.m., where he was warmly received by His Royal Highness Prince Lindaninkosi Dlamini together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Following his arrival, H.E. El Kheraji proceeded to the Royal Villas, where he paid a courtesy call on Senator Pholile Shakantu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The discussions focused on enhancing cooperation between Eswatini and Saudi Arabia in areas such as trade, investment, and development assistance.

Shortly thereafter, the Vice Minister visited the Right Honourable Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini at Lozitha Palace, where the two leaders discussed matters of mutual interest, including potential collaboration in economic development and youth empowerment. The highlight of the visit was a courtesy call to His Majesty King Mswati III, followed by a luncheon hosted in honour of the distinguished guest. The engagement underscored the long-standing cordial relations between Eswatini and Saudi Arabia, both members of the United



▲ His Excellency Eng. Waleed bin Abdulkarim El Kheraji, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia paid a courtesy visit to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Senator Pholile Shakantu.

Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). H.E. El Kheraji's visit is part of a broader diplomatic effort by Saudi Arabia to deepen relations with African nations, promoting cooperation in sectors such as energy, agriculture, education, and infrastructure development. Eswatini, for its part, continues to seek strategic partnerships aimed at advancing its First World Vision and diversifying the national economy. It should be noted that Saudi Arabia has in recent years strengthened its diplomatic presence in Africa, seeking partnerships in

energy, infrastructure, education, and agriculture. Eswatini continues to position itself as a trusted ally and development partner on the continent, advancing His Majesty's First World Vision through strategic international collaboration.

This visit marks a significant step in translating the two countries' previous discussions into actionable partnerships. H.E. El Kheraji also paid a courtesy call to the Prime Minister and His Majesty King Mswati III.

In December last year, the Minister of

Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu signed a general cooperation agreement with His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Saudi Arabia. The agreement reaffirmed the shared commitment to enhancing collaboration between the two nations.

Eswatini and Saudi Arabia are dedicated to bringing these agreements to life for the benefit of both Kingdoms. Eswatini's long-standing ties, established on April 25, 1999, have been strengthened through this cooperation.

DPM calls for good governance as foundation for economic growth

By Kwanele Dhladhla

DEPUTY Prime Minister (DPM) Thuli Dladla has underscored the importance of good governance as the cornerstone for economic recovery and sustainable development.

She urged all sectors of society to commit to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity as Eswatini prepares for the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2).

Speaking during the national stakeholder consultation on social development held at Esibayeni Lodge on Wednesday, Dladla said the meeting provided a crucial platform for Eswatini to consolidate its priorities and clarify its national position ahead of the global summit to be held in November 2025 in Doha, Qatar.

She said the pre-summit marks a significant moment for Eswatini, a moment to reflect, recalibrate, and recommit.

The DPM highlighted that the principles of good governance, sustainable development, and social inclusion were central to the Kingdom's National Development Plan (2023-2028) and the Government Programme of Action (2024-2028).

These frameworks, she said, aim to strengthen social protection, promote equitable access to services, and stimulate inclusive economic growth.

"Good governance remains the founda-



▲ DPM's office US Makhosi Simelane and Director National Children's Services Nomcebo Nhlengetfwa listen to submissions during consultation exercise.

tion for economic recovery and sustainable livelihoods. Our goal is to stimulate inclusive economic growth with a target of 12 percent by the 2029 financial year," Dladla stressed during the event, where she was represented by Under Secretary Makhosi Simelane.

Reflecting on Eswatini's progress since the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, Dladla said the country had made commendable advances in inclusive education, gender equality, access to healthcare, and disability inclusion. She also cited ongoing efforts to improve climate resilience, food sovereignty, and social protection systems for vulnerable groups.

"These efforts are not just policy milestones, they are stories of transformation, of communities empowered, and of lives changed," she said.

The DPM emphasised that the Doha Summit presents an opportunity for Eswatini to reaffirm its dedication to advancing the global social development agenda through key focus areas such as disability inclusion, climate adaptation, and sustainable development.

"As we approach WSSD2, it is imperative that we clarify Eswatini's position on the summit's key themes. We reaffirm our dedication to disability inclusion, strengthening adaptation

strategies under climate resilience, and accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals through integrated national frameworks," she noted.

Dladla called on stakeholders to use the consultation to consolidate Eswatini's priorities and success stories, identifying best



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla,

practices and lessons learned that could be shared at the global stage.

"This consultation will help us consolidate our national priorities and messages for WSSD2. We must identify success stories that showcase best practices, from grassroots innovations to policy-level breakthroughs. These will form the backbone of our engagement in Doha," she said.

While celebrating progress, the DPM acknowledged the persistent social challenges that continue to hinder development, including youth unemployment, inequality, and gaps in social protection. She urged policymakers and social partners to propose actionable solutions that could be integrated into post-summit plans.

"We must confront the challenges that hinder progress and propose practical measures to bridge policy gaps. This is our opportunity to ensure that no one is left behind," Dladla said.



Man allegedly brutally murders girlfriend

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

A QUIET Monday morning in Mathangeni turned into a scene of horror after a young woman's life was tragically cut short in what police have described as a brutal act of gender-based violence.

Matsapha Police have arrested and charged a 31-year-old man from Bethany for the alleged murder of his 32-year-old girlfriend from Sithobelweni. The shocking incident occurred on Monday, October 21, 2025, at around 11:40 a.m. inside the woman's rented flat in Mathangeni.

According to police reports, the suspect allegedly attacked the victim during an argument, stabbing her in

the neck and leaving the knife lodged in her body. When the REPS arrived at the scene, they found the lifeless woman lying in a pool of blood the weapon still embedded in her neck.

"It is suspected that an argument erupted between the two, after which the woman asked the suspect to leave her house. Unfortunately, he refused and instead chose to end her life," confirmed Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer.

The suspect was later apprehended and taken into police custody. He is expected to appear before the Manzini Magistrates Court on Thursday to face a murder charge.

The gruesome killing has left residents of Mathangeni and the near-by communities in deep shock, with

many condemning the rising cases of domestic violence and calling for stronger measures to protect women from abusive relationships.

"This is heartbreaking. No one deserves to die this way, especially at the hands of someone they loved and trusted," said one neighbour, still shaken by the incident.

As the investigation continues, police have urged members of the public to report any signs of domestic abuse before they escalate into tragedy.

"We continue to appeal to couples to resolve their disputes peacefully and seek help when conflicts arise. Taking another person's life is never a solution," added Mnguni.

The victim's name is being withheld until her next of kin have been officially notified.

Police probe alleged sexual assault of minor in Herefords

POLICE in Piggs Peak are investigating a serious incident involving the alleged sexual assault of a seven-year-old girl at Herefords.

According to police reports, the matter was brought forward by the child's mother, a 36-year-old resident of the area, after she discovered what had allegedly happened on Saturday, 18 October 2025, around 11:00 a.m. The suspect, who is a 17-year-old neighbour, is currently the subject of a police investigation.

Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, confirmed the report, saying the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS)

has launched an inquiry to determine the full circumstances surrounding the case.

"The police take all reports involving the abuse of minors very seriously. Investigations are underway, and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the law," said Mnguni.

Mnguni also urged parents and guardians to remain alert to the safety of their children and to report any suspected incidents of abuse immediately.

The case is being handled under the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act of 2018, which provides legal protection and support for victims of abuse.

Police investigations continue.



Crop insurance to cushion farmers against uncontrollable pests, disasters

By Kwanele Dhladhla

IN a bold move to safeguard farmers and sustain the country's food security ambitions, EWADE has announced plans to introduce a crop insurance cover aimed at mitigating the impact of natural disasters, uncontrollable pests, and diseases on maize farmers.

The initiative was part of Eswatini Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise's (EWADE) ongoing efforts to secure the success of the commercial maize project, a government-mandated programme under the Ministry of Agriculture.

The project was one of the country's priority interventions designed to ensure food self-sufficiency through the large-scale production of maize, a staple crop in Eswatini.

EWADE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Samson Sithole explained that the crop insurance plan would act as a financial safety net for both farmers and the Hamba Ubuye revolving fund, an initiative through which EWADE provides farmers

with production inputs on credit, to be repaid after harvest.

"The overwhelming response by farmers under the Hamba Ubuye Fund has been encouraging, but the sustainability of the fund is at risk if insurance measures are not introduced. We have observed that natural calamities and other factors beyond farmers' control could lead to total crop failure, threatening the ability of beneficiaries to repay input loans," Sithole explained in the Eswatini Public Procurement Regulatory Agency (ESPPRA).

The proposed crop insurance could cover losses resulting from natural disasters, uncontrollable pest infestations, and crop diseases that lead to yield reduction or destruction.

EWADE would serve as the beneficiary of the policy, given its role as the fund manager responsible for supporting participating farmers.

In the current maize season, EWADE explained that 110 farmers were supported under the Hamba Ubuye Fund through rainfed production, covering a total area of 856.2 hectares (ha) across all four regions of the country. The breakdown includes 295.5ha in Shiselweni, 350.2ha in Manzini, 95.5ha in

Hhohho, and 115ha in Lubombo.

It was explained that an agreement would be signed between EWADE and an insurance provider to formalise the coverage arrangement. Under the proposed terms, insurers would be notified immediately in the event of a disaster, and payouts would be made within 10 working days following the submission of required documentation.

According to Sithole, the introduction of the crop insurance scheme represents a strategic step toward building resilience in Eswatini's agricultural sector.

"Farmers will have peace of mind knowing that their livelihoods are protected, while the revolving fund will remain sustainable to support future beneficiaries," he noted.

Agricultural experts also welcomed the move, as it aligns with global best practices in risk management for both smallholder and commercial farmers. By reducing the financial burden caused by unforeseen events, insurance coverage has been expected to encourage more farmers to participate in national production initiatives.

The crop insurance policy, once operational, stands to complement EWADE's broader mandate of promoting agricultural development



▲ EWADE CEO Samson Sithole.

and water resource management while supporting the government's agenda for food security and commercialised farming.

"Our vision is to see Emaswati farmers thrive, even under challenging climatic and environmental conditions. Insurance is one way of ensuring that progress in

the agricultural sector is not reversed by factors beyond human control," it was explained.

With the maize production season underway, experts added that the introduction of crop insurance could not be timelier, signaling a proactive approach to securing Eswatini's agricultural future.

Govt defends ‘Bhompompo’ ban

Stories by Delisa Magagula and Gift Nkabinde

THE Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology of Eswatini (ICT) defended the government’s decision to ban older-mobile devices known locally as ‘bobhompompo’.

The ban is in line with the transition to newer network systems. During a cybercrime awareness session for Pensioners held at the Mbabane National Library the Minister for ICT, Savannah Maziya, addressed concerns about the proposed discontinuation of 2G and 3G mobile devices.

The ban affects phones that support only legacy networks and are popularly referred to in Eswatini as ‘Bhompompo’.

According to the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM), the importa-

tion and approval of 2G-only and 3G-only devices will be prohibited from November 30, 2025, with full network shutdown planned by December 2028 for 2G and December 2030 for 3G.

The decision was already raised in Parliament during a second-quarter performance report debate. MP Manzi Zwane pointed out that during earlier debates the Ministry had indicated that Bhompompo devices would soon be discontinued.

He questioned whether the move might create a divide, especially among elderly users in rural areas who rely on older phones.

In response, Minister Maziya told the gathering that the discontinuation of Bhompompo devices has been extended to 2028, allowing a longer transition period.

She made the point that the ban is also intended to reduce exposure of elderly users to mobile scams that exploit out-dated devices and networks.



▲ During a cybercrime awareness session for Pensioners held at the Mbabane National Library the Minister for ICT, Savannah Maziya, addressed concerns about the proposed discontinuation of 2G and 3G mobile devices.



Museums, Archives to go digital

THE Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) has announced plans to digitise the country’s museums and archives as part of its national strategy to enhance access to historical information and preserve Eswatini’s cultural heritage.

The announcement was made during the commemoration of International Archives Day, held under the theme ‘Archives are Accessible, Archives for Everyone’ The event was hosted in collaboration with the Eswatini National Archives and Records Service (ENARS) and brought together archivists, researchers, innovators, and students to discuss the future of archival preservation.

Delivering the keynote address, Minister of ICT Savannah Maziya said the digitisation of museums and archives is a critical step toward improving access to the nation’s historical records.

“Technology allows us to tear down the barriers that once made archives seem distant or inaccessible. Through digitisation, we are making it possible for someone in Siteki, Mbabane, or even outside our borders to access historical records without ever stepping into a physical archive. This not only preserves fragile materials but creates a bridge between generations, geographies, and cultures,” said the Minister.

The Regional Administrator for the Hhohho Region, Princess Tsandzile Dlamini, who previously served as an archivist with ENARS, delivered the welcome remarks. She

commended the Ministry’s efforts, noting that the digital transformation of the archives and museums will ensure the long-term preservation of the country’s documentary heritage.

The event featured presentations on the establishment of school archives and the preservation of indigenous knowledge, followed by a panel discussion exploring the year’s theme.

Participants highlighted the importance of technology in expanding public access to information and strengthening cultural identity.

Minister Maziya said the digitisation initiative forms part of Eswatini’s Smart Government Strategy, aimed at transforming public service delivery through technology.

The programme includes the rollout of fibre-optic infrastructure across the country, partnerships to enhance digital capacity, and training initiatives for archival staff.

She added that the Ministry’s goal is to ensure that museums and archives become accessible to all citizens, regardless of location, through online platforms that will make historical and cultural resources available at the click of a button.

“Our aim is to ensure that every liSwati benefits from digital access to our shared history and culture,” the Minister said.

The move is part of a wider government effort to modernise ICT infrastructure, preserve the nation’s heritage, and promote inclusivity in the digital era.



▲ The event was honored by the attendance of Prince Bandzile and the Minister for ICT, Savannah Maziya, signaling a high-level commitment to the national event.



▲ Entrance view of the Swaziland National Museum.

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Army recruitment

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

Mass turnout highlights job crisis in Nkwene

THE massive turnout of nearly 1,000 residents at the Nkwene Army Recruitment Race on Tuesday has sparked renewed calls for job creation in Eswatini's rural areas, as community leaders say the event highlighted the desperation among young people seeking employment opportunities.

Speaking during the exercise, Nkwene Buphopho Dan Dladla said the overwhelming attendance was proof that many young people in the constituency were in urgent need of jobs. He urged government to fast-track the construction of factory shells in rural communities to decentralise employment and stimulate local economies.

"Our people are desperate for jobs," Dladla said.

"If factory shells could be relocated to rural areas, we would see many young people gain employment close to home instead of migrating to towns. This would strengthen families and reduce poverty in places like Nkwene."

The call came as dozens of hopefuls pushed their limits in a race meant to identify candidates for the next phase of the Es-



▲ High numbers of army hopefuls before the race at Nkwene.

watini Army recruitment process. The event, which attracted a large crowd of supporters and onlookers, became a vivid reflection of the economic hardship facing many rural households

where joining the army represents one of the few stable career paths available.

Among the competitors was 26-year-old Mbukiso Dlamini from Malongo, who out-

paced the field to claim first place in the men's category. His determination and focus earned him a spot in the next stage of the recruitment.

"This victory means everything to me," said a breathless but emotional Dlamini after crossing the finish line. "I've been training and praying for this opportunity. Getting into the army would change my life and help

me support my family."

Army officials praised the discipline and commitment shown by participants, noting that physical strength is only one part of a multi-stage selection process.

"We've seen incredible effort here at Nkwene," said one recruitment officer. "The passion displayed today reflects a deep desire among young people to serve and secure stable futures."

For Dladla and many others, the event underscored the need for broader government intervention to combat unemployment beyond recruitment drives.

"The enthusiasm we saw today is not just about joining the army it's about young people searching for hope," he added. "We need factories, skills centres, and development projects that create lasting jobs in our communities."

As the dust settled over the Nkwene Inkhundla grounds, the message from residents was clear: Eswatini's rural youth are ready to work all they need is opportunity.



Children, youth scamming pensioners

Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE event also revealed the darker side of Eswatini's growing digital culture, cybercrime within families.

Nokuthula Hlophe, ESCCOM's Cybersecurity Manager, told the pensioners that many online scams are not carried out by foreign hackers or strangers but by young people within their own households.

"We have found that a number of cases involve children and grandchildren stealing or phishing their parents' and grandparents' accounts," Hlophe said.

She mentioned that, they use their trust to get passwords or mobile money PINs, and then drain the accounts.

She added that the emotional shame attached to such cases often prevents the elderly from reporting them.

"Most of the time, grandparents

stay silent because they are embarrassed or afraid of getting their children arrested. This silence allows the problem to grow," said Hlophe.

Hlophe urged pensioners to protect their finances the same way they protect their homes.

"Never give your PIN to anyone. Don't use simple passwords like your birthday? Do not click on links sent to you through WhatsApp or text messages," she warned.

One of the most serious threats highlighted during the session was the rise of WhatsApp scams.

According to ESCCOM data, scammers increasingly infiltrate WhatsApp groups particularly community, church, and family groups to collect phone numbers. Once they gain access, they impersonate trusted contacts and send messages asking victims to forward security codes or click suspicious links.

"Once you share that code, the attacker takes over your WhatsApp account. They then send messages to your friends or family asking for money or pretending to be in

trouble. By the time you realise it, they've already emptied accounts or borrowed money in your name," Hlophe explained.

The regulator identified phishing fraudulent attempts to obtain sensitive information as the most common cybercrime in Eswatini.

These scams often begin with a realistic-looking message from a bank or mobile operator claiming that the user's account has been suspended or require an update.

Hlophe said ESCCOM had recorded a surge in phishing attempts in the past six months, many targeting elderly citizens who use mobile money to receive pensions or family support.

"Scammers know when pension payments are made. They time their attacks around those dates. If you receive a message saying your account will be closed or that you must verify something, ignore it and call your bank directly," she said.

Woman swindled out of E200 000

A WOMAN from Lobamba was reported to have lost E200 000 of her pension pay out after being scammed.

During the session, Nokuthula Hlophe, ESCCOM's Cybersecurity Manager recounted one recent case that underscored the vulnerability of the elderly in the digital age.

A retired woman from Lobamba lost E200, 000 just days after her pension was deposited. The money was withdrawn in three large transactions before she realised something was wrong. Investigations later showed that she had clicked on a fraudulent link resembling her bank's website.

The scammer had mirrored the site's design, including logos and customer service contacts, tricking her into entering her details. By the time she reported the incident, the funds had been transferred to several untraceable accounts.

"This is exactly why we are here. These criminals are fast and sophisticated. Once money is gone, it's almost impossible to recover. Prevention is the only real protection," Hlophe said.

She further mentioned Police are investigating the case, and ESCCOM is working with local banks to improve alert systems for unusual transactions.

Worth noting is that Cybercrime has been steadily rising in Eswatini alongside the expansion of mobile banking, online shopping, and digital payments.

The Central Bank of Eswatini

has warned that financial scams now represent one of the fastest-growing threats to consumer security.

In 2024 alone, more than E30 million was lost to digital fraud, much of it involving mobile money accounts. The elderly are among the most targeted groups because they often lack digital literacy and are hesitant to question official-sounding messages.

Minister Maziya said the government's approach combines technology with community education.

"Digital progress is important, but it must be safe. We cannot allow criminals to use technology to steal from our elders," the Minister said.

She also pledged that her Ministry would expand the cybercrime awareness campaign to rural communities, where mobile money usage is high but access to information is limited.

"We want every citizen young and old to understand that technology is not the enemy. It's a tool. But it must be used wisely," she said. When Pensioners left the library, many expressed gratitude for the training, some resetting passwords on the spot. Others promised to teach their peers back home.

"I have learned that you must never share your PIN, even with your children," said 72-year-old pensioner Anna Matsebula.

BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Airlines warned over poor service standards

THE Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Competition Commission (CCC) has issued a strong warning to airlines. These are airlines operating across the region, including those serving Eswatini, to improve how they handle passengers affected by delays, cancellations, or lost luggage or risk facing regulatory action. The regional competition body says it has been inundated with complaints from passengers who have endured cancelled flights, damaged baggage, and lack of assistance from airlines.

Gold slide continues, stocks keep calm

LONDON/SINGAPORE — The shine was threatening to come off one of the year's best-performing trades on Wednesday as gold extended its sharpest drop in over five years, although equity bulls remained unfazed as bond markets took the strain. Gold remains firmly on course for its strongest year since the 1979 oil crisis thanks to a 50 per cent leap in price, but another 2.5 per cent drop during London trading - after Tuesday's 5 per cent dive - pushed it back towards \$4,000 an ounce.

Oil rises about 2% on trade talk optimism

LONDON — Oil prices pushed higher for a second day on Wednesday, rising by about 2 per cent, buoyed by hopes of progress for a U.S. trade deal with China and India. Brent crude futures rose \$1.19, or 1.9 per cent, to \$62.51 a barrel as of 1313 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures climbed \$1.24, or 2.2 per cent, to \$58.48.

By Delisa Magagula

ANNUAL consumer price inflation eased to 2.6 per cent in August 2025, down from 2.8 per cent in July, according to the Central Bank of Eswatini's latest statistical report.

The Bank stated that the year-on-year rate marked the seventh consecutive month of decline, signalling continued disinflation.

"The moderation in inflation largely reflects stable food and fuel prices, as well as easing demand-side pressures," the Bank noted.

The report further indicated that the discount rate remained at 6.75 per cent and the prime lending rate at 10.25 per cent in September. The Bank through CBE Governor Dr Phil Mnisi said this reflected an assessment that current monetary conditions are consistent with the inflation outlook.

"Broad money (M2) grew modestly while private sector credit expanded by 5.4 per cent year-on-year, indicating that lending activity remained positive despite subdued price growth. A stronger Lilangeni/Rand against major currencies in September helped contain imported inflation," Mnisi said in his report.

Public debt stands at E38.2 billion

Eswatini's public debt stood at E38.2 billion at the end of September 2025, representing 39.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the Central Bank of Eswatini has reported.

The Bank's report noted the debt level placed the country in a moderate range by regional standards but emphasised the importance of monitoring debt accumulation.

"Fiscal sustainability will depend on the balance between economic growth, revenue performance, and the cost of borrowing," the report stated.

It added that domestic and external debt servicing obligations remained manageable, though borrowing costs could rise if revenues weaken or global rates increase. The report further indicated that gross official reserves declined by 9.2 per cent month-on-month to E10.8 billion, while private sector credit grew by 5.4 per cent year-on-year. The Bank noted that maintaining adequate reserves and ensuring that borrowed funds support growth-related projects were key to preserving fiscal stability.

Trade surplus widens to E915.9 million

Eswatini recorded a trade surplus of E915.9 million in September 2025, up from E213.1 million in August, according to the Central Bank of Eswatini's Monthly Statistical Release.

The Bank said the improvement was mainly due to higher merchandise exports relative to imports.

"The widening of the trade surplus reflects strong external sector performance," the statement read. Despite the surplus, the report showed that gross official reserves fell by 9.2 per cent month-on-month to E10.8 billion, partly reflecting external payments during the period.

Meanwhile, broad money (M2) rose by 1.9 per cent month-on-month and 3.0 per cent year-on-year, while private sector credit increased 5.4 per cent year-on-year.

The Bank said the appreciation of the Lilangeni/Rand against major currencies helped reduce imported inflation pressures during the

month.

"The exchange rate movements supported price stability and external purchasing power," the report added.

Reserves fall as Lilangeni strengthens

The Central Bank of Eswatini has reported a decline in the country's gross official reserves, even as the local currency gained strength against major global currencies in September 2025. According to the Bank's Monthly Statistical Release, gross official reserves decreased by 9.2 per cent month-on-month to E10.8 billion, from E11.9 billion in August.

The fall, the Bank said, was due mainly to external payments made on behalf of government and scheduled debt servicing during the period.

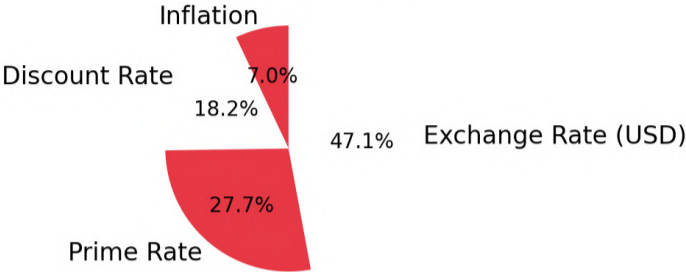
"The drawdown in reserves reflects foreign-exchange payments that coincided with lower external receipts," the report noted.

Nevertheless, the reserves remain sufficient to cover 3.5 months of projected imports of goods and services, which is within the region's comfort range, further notes the report.

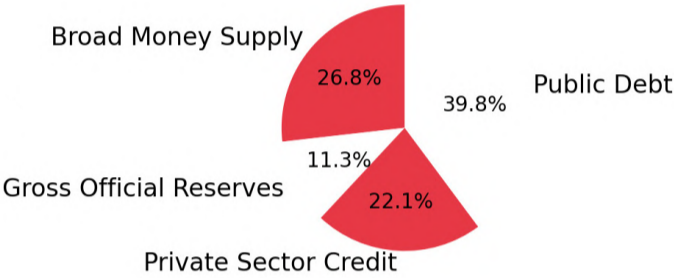
The report added that the Lilangeni/Rand appreciated against the US dollar, the pound sterling and the euro during September.

The appreciation, the Bank said, helped to ease the impact of imported inflation by lowering the cost of foreign goods and fuel.

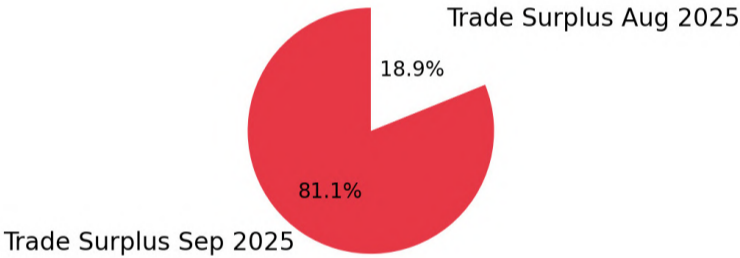
Economic Rates (Percentages)



Monetary and Fiscal Indicators (Billions E)

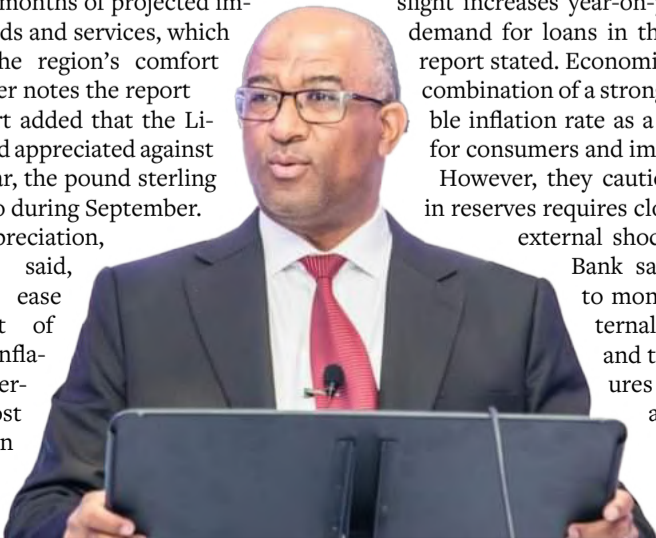
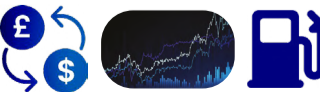


Trade Balance Comparison (Millions E)



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.7695	17.2338
G.B. Pound	22.4659	23.1349
EURO	19.4833	20.1186
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90 /Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	



CBE Governor
Dr Phil Mnisi.



▲ Travellers flying in and out of King Mswati III International Airport and connecting through regional hubs have reported similar experiences.

By Delisa Magagula

THE Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Competition Commission (CCC) has issued a strong warning to airlines.

These are airlines operating across the region, including those serving Eswatini, to improve how they handle passengers affected by delays, cancellations, or lost luggage or risk facing regulatory action.

The regional competition body says it has been inundated with complaints from passengers who have endured cancelled flights, damaged baggage, and lack of assistance from airlines.

Between 2021 and 2024, the Commission handled more than ten large-scale complaints involving multiple airlines, many of which affected hundreds of passengers in one case.

Breaking down the report, the Commission's Manager of Economic Research, Policy and Advocacy, Kondwani Kaonga said the pattern points to systemic service failures and a worrying disregard for passenger welfare, particularly at regional airports that handle transit traffic.

"Travellers flying in and out of King Mswati III International Airport and connecting through regional hubs such as Johannesburg, Nairobi, and Addis Ababa have reported similar experiences. These include last-minute flight cancellations, poor communication, and difficulties in claiming refunds," said Kaonga.

According to the CCC's regional consumer survey, delayed flights were the most common complaint, accounting for 31.7 per cent of all cases received.

This was followed by rescheduled flights (15.4 per cent), damaged baggage (11.7 per cent), and delayed baggage (10.6 per cent), and flight cancellations (9.4 per cent). Other recurring issues included lost luggage and unfair booking conditions.

The Eswatini Competition Commission, which enforces consumer protection laws at national level, has welcomed the guidance as a critical step towards standardising how airlines treat passengers across borders.

The report found that nearly 72 per cent of passengers affected by cancelled or delayed flights did not receive any form of redress or compensation. Only a minority around 39.6 per cent were offered refunds, meals, accommodation, or alternative bookings.

Airlines warned over poor service standards

For passengers whose luggage was lost or damaged, more than a quarter (27.6 per cent) said they were not even informed about how to file a claim or pursue compensation.

"These numbers show a huge gap between what airlines promise and what they actually deliver," the Commission's economic research manager said.

The new guidance sets out clear obligations for airlines operating within COMESA member states, including Eswatini. It outlines what must happen when flights are delayed, cancelled, or overbooked, and how passengers should be compensated.

For delayed flights, airlines are expected to:

- Provide regular updates every 45 minutes on the new departure time and reasons for the delay.
- Offer refreshments such as water, soft drinks, or snacks.
- Give passengers access to at least two international calls, SMS, or emails. Provide meals and hotel
- Accommodation for delays exceeding four hours.
- Arrange transport between the airport and accommodation.

Passengers are entitled to compensation unless they were notified of the cancellation well in advance (at least a week before the flight).

In line with international aviation standards such as the Montreal Convention, airlines' liability for lost or damaged baggage is capped at the equivalent of 1,000 Special Drawing Rights (about USD 1,369) per passenger, unless a higher value was declared when the baggage was checked in.

The Commission further reminded airlines that refunds and compensation must be processed within 30 days and paid in the same form in which the ticket was purchased for example, cash or card refund, not travel vouchers unless agreed by the passenger.

For overbooked flights, passengers denied boarding are entitled to the same rights as those affected by delays or cancellations including full refunds and, in some cases, additional compensation.



▲ Kondwani Kaonga, Manager of Economic Research, Policy and Advocacy at Comesa Competition Commission.

Where airlines re-route passengers, they must ensure comparable travel conditions, cover accommodation if overnight stays are required, and provide free transfers between airports if the substitute flight arrives at a different location.

"Airlines must take full responsibility for their passengers until they reach their final destination. Leaving passengers stranded at airports without updates or assistance is unacceptable and unlawful under COMESA's competition and consumer regulation," the economic research manager emphasised.

The CCC has called on national consumer protection agencies, including Eswatini's Fair Trading Commission and Civil Aviation Authority, to help enforce the guidance.

The goal is to ensure that regional airlines whether domestic carriers or international operators flying within COMESA comply with the same minimum standards of care.

The guidance is supported by Part 5 of the COMESA Competition Regulations, which prohibits misleading information, unconscionable conduct, and failure to provide adequate redress to consumers.

Airlines found violating these rules could face penalties or restrictions within the regional market.

The Commission's latest move comes amid growing air traffic within COMESA, driven by trade, tourism, and labour mobility. Eswatini's increasing integration into regional markets means more citizens rely on air travel for business, education, and family connections.

"The aviation sector connects people and economies, but for that connection to work, passengers must be treated fairly. This guidance isn't just about rules it's about respect and accountability," the Commission's economic research manager concluded.

Gold slide continues, stocks keep calm

By **Marc Jones and Rae Wee**

LONDON/SINGAPORE — The shine was threatening to come off one of the year's best-performing trades on Wednesday as gold extended its sharpest drop in over five years, although equity bulls remained unfazed as bond markets took the strain.

Gold remains firmly on course for its strongest year since the 1979 oil crisis thanks to a 50 per cent leap in price, but another 2.5 per cent drop during London trading - after Tuesday's 5 per cent dive - pushed it back towards \$4,000 an ounce. There has been no obvious catalyst for the plunge other than general altitude sickness after a blockbuster run amid uncertainty about a reshaping of the world order.

European stocks edge up, bond yields nudge lower

"Gold was massively stretched, massively overbought. There's been a lot of FOMO (fear of missing out) going into that market," said Tony Sycamore, a market analyst at IG, adding that tech stocks and some other markets were in a similar position.

"For some of these other frothy markets, we're seeing little flash crashes now ... We're just seeing little tremors in markets, and potentially there's something more significant to come."

Equity markets, which have also roared higher this year, ignored gold's stumbles, gearing up instead for Tesla results later, which will kick off earnings season for the super-sized 'Magnificent Seven' group of Wall Street stocks.

Europe's STOXX 600 index was inching higher, after getting close to a new record high on Tuesday, although most large Asian bourses ended lower overnight.

Geopolitics remained front and centre with a planned summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin now in doubt and ambiguity too over a potential meeting between Trump and China's President Xi Jinping.

The selloff in gold injected some volatility into the broader markets overnight, but it did little to knock other safe-haven assets like bonds.



▲ Customers shop gold jewellery at a jewellery department store in Beijing, China.

European government debt yields nudged lower, while 10-year U.S. Treasury yields - often the biggest driver of global borrowing costs - consolidated the 1-year closing low of 3.945 per cent they had recorded on Tuesday.

Investors scooped up UK 'gilts' too - but also sold the pound - after data showed Britain's consumer price inflation and a key underlying measure of price growth unexpectedly held steady in September.

That pushed interest rate futures to price a roughly 75 per cent chance the Bank of England will now cut UK rates to 3.75 per cent from 4 per cent at its December meeting, up from about 46 per cent before the data.

"We see clear and pronounced risks of a December cut versus our base case of a February move," Morgan Stanley analyst Bruna Skarica said, referring to the inflation numbers, adding a cut could even happen in November.

Japan stimulus

Oil prices pushed higher for a second day, rising by about 2 per cent, buoyed by hopes of progress for U.S. trade deals with China and India.

Asia's other focus had been that new Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is preparing an economic stimulus package likely to exceed last year's 13.9 trillion yen (\$92.19 billion).

The Nikkei saw a late rally but MSCI's index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan ended down 0.4 per cent, while Nasdaq and S&P 500 futures were flat after a mixed session on Tuesday.

Shares of Netflix sank nearly 6 per cent after the bell as the streaming giant missed Wall Street's third-quarter earnings targets, whereas General Motors' stock surged 15 per cent after raising its profit outlook.

In currencies, the dollar was heading for a fourth day of modest gains while the yen ticked up to 151.64 per dollar after the stimulus report.

The package marks Takaichi's first major economic initiative since the advocate of big fiscal spending took office on Tuesday, reflecting her commitment to what she calls "responsible proactive fiscal policy."

The Bank of Japan also meets next week, where expectations are for the central bank - like the ECB in Europe - to stand pat on rates.

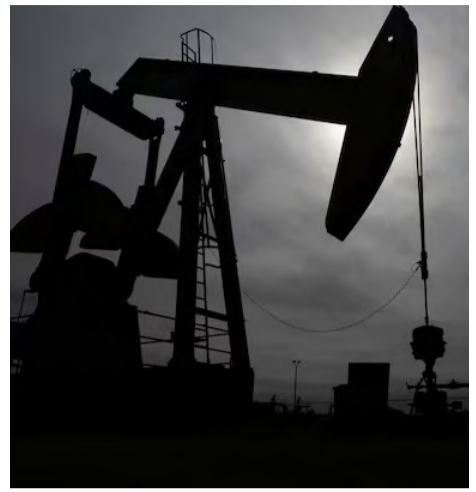
Waiting on central bank cues

The U.S. Federal Reserve also meets next week, and investors have almost fully priced in a 25-basis-point rate cut.

The dearth of U.S. economic data due to the ongoing government shutdown means that policymakers could be left flying blind at the meeting, a less-than-ideal situation as they remain divided over which risks deserve the most attention.

Trump on Tuesday rebuffed a request by top Democratic lawmakers to meet until the three-week-old U.S. government shutdown ends.

The shutdown has in turn left currencies largely rangebound over the past few sessions due to the lack of fresh catalysts from data releases, although inflation data will be published on Friday. (Reuters)



▲ A pump jack operates near a crude oil reserve in the Permian Basin oil field near Midland, Texas, U.S.

Oil rises about 2% on trade talk optimism

By **Ahmad Ghaddar**

LONDON — Oil prices pushed higher for a second day on Wednesday, rising by about 2 per cent, buoyed by hopes of progress for a U.S. trade deal with China and India.

Brent crude futures rose \$1.19, or 1.9 per cent, to \$62.51 a barrel as of 1313 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures climbed \$1.24, or 2.2 per cent, to \$58.48.

The Reuters Power Up newsletter provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here.

"Oil prices climbed after reports suggested the U.S. and India are close to finalising a trade deal that could see India gradually cut imports of Russian crude, potentially lifting demand for other grades," MUFG analyst Soojin Kim said.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he spoke with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, adding that Modi assured him India would be limiting its oil purchases from Russia.

India's Mint newspaper reported on Wednesday that the two countries were nearing a long-stalled trade agreement that would reduce U.S. tariffs on Indian imports to 15-16 per cent from 50 per cent.

Investors are also closely watching the progress of U.S.-China trade talks as officials from both countries are set to meet this week in Malaysia.

Trump said on Monday he expected to work out a fair trade deal with Chinese President Xi Jinping, whom he was due to meet in South Korea next week. On Tuesday, however, Trump again added to uncertainty over the meeting, saying it might not happen.

Meanwhile, supply concerns flared again on news that a summit between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin had been put on hold, and on disruption fears as Western governments pressured Asian buyers to reduce their purchases of Russian oil.

A potential drop in U.S. oil inventories also boosted prices.

U.S. crude, gasoline and distillate stocks fell last week, market sources said, citing American Petroleum Institute figures on Tuesday. The U.S. Department of Energy said on Tuesday it aims to buy 1 million barrels of crude oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, as it seeks to take advantage of relatively low oil prices to help replenish its stockpile. (Reuters)

SA rand slips after local inflation uptick



▲ A picture illustration shows a South African two Rand coin.

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand slipped on Wednesday after September headline inflation ticked up, but the increase was smaller than expected, bolstering the case for the central bank to resume rate cuts.

At 1255 GMT the rand traded at 17.46 against the dollar, about 0.5 per cent down from its Tuesday close.

Headline consumer inflation quickened to 3.4 per cent in annual terms from 3.3 per cent in August, below the median forecast of 3.5 per cent in a Reuters poll.

The South African Reserve Bank has already delivered three interest rate cuts

this year, but it paused at its last policy meeting in September to assess the impact of previous cuts.

"In our view, dovish inflation developments since September are likely to support a 25bp rate cut from the SARB at its upcoming November MPC meeting," said Andrew Matheny, South Africa Economist at Goldman Sachs.

The SARB's next monetary policy announcement is scheduled for November 20. On the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the Top-40 index was last down 0.6 per cent.

The benchmark 2035 government bond was also down, with the yield up 3 basis points at 8.94 per cent. (Reuters)

SIMONE Gbagbo, a former first lady in Ivory Coast who was once wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, is running for president on Saturday, marking a new chapter in her political career without her ex-husband.

The 76-year-old politician, known in the West African nation as the “Iron Lady”, is the most high-profile name among those who were allowed to run against incumbent Alassane Ouattara, who is widely expected to win a fourth term.

Simone Gbagbo played a leading role during the tumultuous tenure of former President Laurent Gbagbo, which was marked by civil war from 2002 to 2007 and again after the 2010 election.

“All the ministers respect me, and I am often placed above them,” she once told the French newspaper L’Express.

FROM ARREST TO FOUNDING A NEW PARTY

Laurent Gbagbo’s refusal to acknowledge defeat to Ouattara in 2010 led to fighting that killed around 3,000 people and ended when the couple was arrested together at their Abidjan residence.

In 2021, Laurent Gbagbo filed for divorce, bringing to a close a partnership that stretched back to their days as young opposition activists. A year later, Simone Gbagbo launched her current party, the Movement of Skilled Generations, which she has described as rooted in social democratic principles.

Arthur Banga, a historian and political analyst, said he does not expect Simone Gbagbo to win this year because her new party has a limited voter base.

“But she is positioning herself for the future,” he told Reuters, noting that she could take advantage of the void left by Laurent Gbagbo and Tidjane Thiam, a former Credit Suisse CEO. Both their candidacies were rejected by the electoral commission.

“She will become the leader of the political opposition after these elections,” Banga said.

BACKGROUND IN OPPOSITION

Gabon not planning debt restructuring, focused on growth – vice president



▲ A drone view of the administrative center buildings at the seaside in Libreville, Gabon.

GABON is not considering a debt restructuring or reprofiling, and is in the process of rebasing its calculations of GDP, which will make its debt-to-GDP ratio more favourable, the country’s vice president told Reuters.

Ivory Coast’s Simone Gbagbo, from first lady to presidential challenger

POLITICS

Simone Gbagbo started her political career as a trade unionist in the 1970s when she opposed the single-party rule of the country’s founding President Felix Houphouet-Boigny.

In the 1980s, she co-founded the Ivorian Popular Front party alongside Laurent Gbagbo, whom she married in 1989, and other opposition figures. She entered national politics in 1995, winning a seat in the National Assembly during general elections dominated by then President Henri Konan Bedie’s Democratic Party.

Her husband went on to assume the presidency five years later.

After their arrest in 2011, Laurent Gbagbo was sent to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, but Ouattara’s government refused to transfer Simone Gbagbo.

Instead she went on trial at home and in 2015 received a 20-year sentence for crimes against the state.

In 2018, Ouattara granted her an amnesty in a move widely seen as an effort to ease political tensions.

PLEDGE FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

Simone Gbagbo’s platform features a national reconciliation plan that would involve both justice and reconciliation for past political violence.

Her party has said she would introduce a general amnesty law to release all political and military prisoners and facilitate the return of exiles.

Simone Gbagbo is also known for her call to achieve “true monetary autonomy” in Ivory Coast, the world’s biggest cocoa producer, by replacing the euro-pegged CFA franc with another currency at the subregional level.

She has also said she would support countries from the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) in West Africa, where military leaders have seized power in coups in recent years. Those countries - Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger -



▲ Simone Ehiwet Gbagbo, designated candidate of the Movement of Capable Generations (MGC) for the upcoming October 2025 presidential election, speaks at a rally of a coalition of political parties calling for political dialogue with the government to ensure an inclusive and peaceful election, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

have an antagonistic relationship with Ouattara.

Earlier this month, Simone Gbagbo’s campaign gained backing from Charles Ble Goude, a close ally of her ex-husband who like Laurent Gbagbo was acquitted by the ICC in 2019.

“Simone Gbagbo has demonstrated that

she is a committed politician and, above all, a pragmatic woman,” Banga said, adding that she seems poised to strengthen her popular legitimacy by running in this election, which is widely expected to be the last time Ouattara, 83, runs.

“Let’s not forget that 2030 will be different,” he said. (Reuters)

are not at this juncture at this time.”

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

Gabon’s World Bank disbursements were suspended in January over mounting arrears, and it had been facing an acute squeeze on liquidity that has left it increasingly reliant upon regional capital markets to meet financing needs. Chambrier said “there is no reason to be scared” of the country’s debt and borrowing, and that Gabon is finalising a national economic plan that would ensure all the country’s debt contributed to long-term growth and development.

He told a panel earlier in the morning that Gabon was working to increase its oil output and was able to repay.

In his comments to Reuters, he said rebasing the gross domestic product calculations would better capture the informal sector and the country’s “natural capital”.

That would produce a bigger GDP figure than the current calculation, which according to the World Bank stood at just under \$21 billion in 2024. The rebasing would likely be completed before year-end and make the country’s debt-to-GDP ratio more favourable, he said.

The audit of internal debt would ensure that it was “clean or correct”.

“This is part of the rule of law in a country, you really need to assess that things are well done and that the governance is good. The resources are well used. There is no evaporation,” he said.

He also said that while Gabon is in regular contact with the International Monetary

Fund, it is focused on having “room for manoeuvre to invest” rather than on securing a lending programme from the Fund.

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(Reuters)

Intel results to show if barrage of investments in chipmaker paying off

INTEL'S third-quarter results on Thursday will show whether a clutch of recent high-profile investments can shore up its strained finances as new CEO Lip-Bu Tan attempts to revive the ailing chipmaker.

Multi billion-dollar investments from Nvidia and Japan's SoftBank as well as an unprecedented U.S. government stake during the September quarter provided bright spots in Intel's (long-running turnaround).

The investments have helped its shares double in value this year and outpace gains in AI darling Nvidia, setting a high bar for the company expected to report a 1% drop in third-quarter sales to \$13.14 billion according to LSEG data.

Joe Tigay, portfolio manager at Intel investor Equity Armor, said investors would be closely looking for progress on the company's broader strategy.

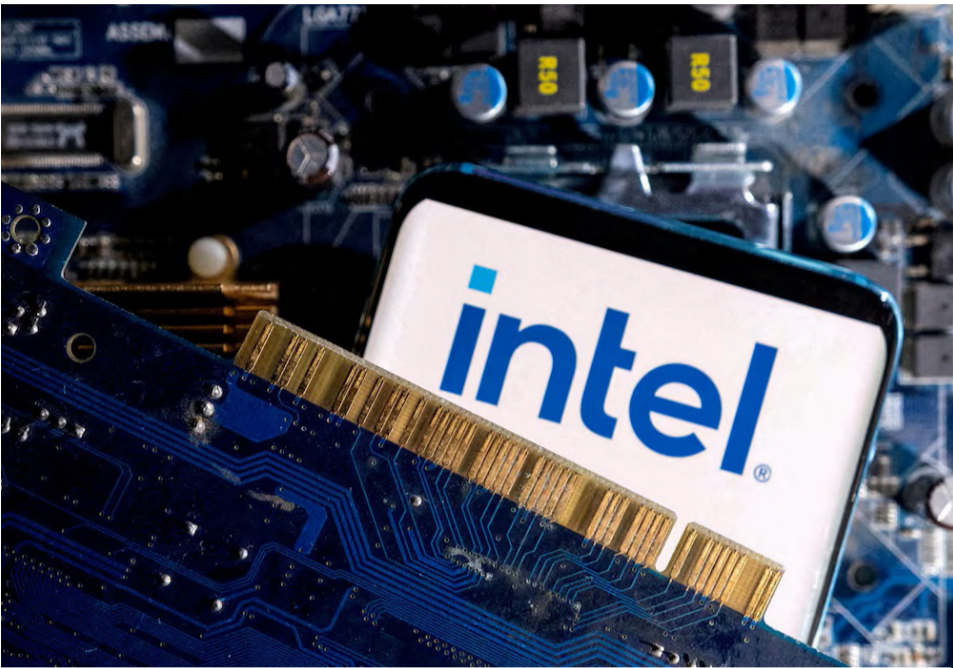
"Putting all (recent investments) together - What does Intel's big picture look like? What does their cash look like?" Tigay said.

CASH BOOST, EARNINGS DILUTION

Nvidia said last month it would invest \$5 billion in Intel, giving it an about 4% stake after new shares are issued. In August, Intel secured another \$2 billion from SoftBank.

After U.S. President Donald Trump called for CEO Lip Bu Tan's resignation over China ties, a hastily arranged Washington meeting produced an unusual deal involving the U.S. government taking a 10% stake for \$8.9 billion.

The moves hand Intel a critical cash lifeline after ousted CEO Pat Gelsinger's manufacturing expansion strained margins fol-



▲ A man walks across the logo of Intel at the ongoing India Mobile Congress 2025 at Yashobhoomi, a convention and expo center in New Delhi, India.

lowing years of missteps.

But scant details on the deals have left Wall Street waiting for clarity on their potential benefits.

The company is expected to record a per-share loss of 22 cents in the third quarter, and adjusted per-share earnings of 1 cent.

Intel's per-share earnings in the September quarter could be impacted by share dilution from the government deal and depending on the close of Nvidia and Softbank's agreements, per-share profit could be hurt in the fourth quarter, said Ryuta Makino, analyst at Intel investor Gabelli Funds.

"It will lead to dilution, but in my opinion, share dilution is the least of Intel shareholders' worries."

PROBLEMS PERSIST BUT END-MARKETS EXPANDING

While they're seen as a vote of confidence in Intel's future, analysts and investors agree the recent funding deals don't alleviate Intel's long-standing issues.

Intel has been consistently losing share in the personal computer and server central processing unit (CPU) market to AMD, while Arm-based architecture poses a threat to its legacy x86 chip blueprint.

However, overall end-market demand is improving as a Windows refresh cycle boosts sales, with preliminary results from research firm Gartner showing an 8% boost in worldwide third-quarter PC shipments.

Intel's PC chip unit is expected to log an 11% jump to \$8.12 billion, amid a ramp up in production of its Panther Lake PC processor - the first chip made on its 18A manufacturing technology - with the initial units slated to ship before end-2025.

The success of its 18A manufacturing node is instrumental to Intel's contract manufacturing business, after Tan significantly pared back his predecessor Gelsinger's hefty expansion plans.

The manufacturing segment is expected to report flat revenue at \$4.37 billion in the third quarter.

Analysts expect sales in Intel's data center unit to grow 18% to \$3.95 billion.

While Intel has failed to gain traction in the booming artificial intelligence graphics processor industry dominated by Nvidia, the rapid build-out of data center capacity has expanded the market for its server CPUs used alongside GPUs.

Intel revived efforts to make its mark on the GPU market with a new AI chip for data centers slated for launch next year.

"The markets are giving Intel a major pass on their current struggles," said Equity Armor's Tigay.

"Intel has a great deal of leeway based on the expectations of what the new partnerships will bring and their new product designs."

(Reuters)

Google says it has developed landmark quantum computing algorithm

GOOGLE said it has developed a computer algorithm that points the way to practical applications for quantum computing and will be able to generate unique data for use with artificial intelligence.

The new algorithm called Quantum Echoes, which runs on the company's quantum chip, is 13,000 times faster than the most sophisticated classical computing algorithm on supercomputers, Google said.

In the future, the Quantum Echoes algorithm may be able to help measure molecular structure in molecules which could aid in drug discovery and help material science through identifying new types of materials, company executives told a media briefing last week.

Alphabet's (GOOGL.O), opens new tab Google is among several major tech firms including Amazon (AMZN.O), opens new tab and Microsoft (MSFT.O), opens new tab investing in quantum computing - which promises to speed up computing and solve problems out of reach for today's machines.

Last year, Google unveiled its quantum chip, Willow, that the company said is able to overcome a crucial problem with "qubits", the building blocks of quantum computing.

The development of the algorithm was roughly equivalent in significance to the chip, the executives said.

The algorithm is also verifiable with other quantum computers or through experiments. Verifiable data means that it can lead to practical applications.

"If I can't tell you the data is correct, if I can't prove to you the data is correct, how can I do anything with it?" Google staff research scientist Tom O'Brien said.



For artificial intelligence, Google's engineers hope to be able to use the algorithm to help create new data sets for uses in areas

such as life sciences where good data sets do not exist to train AI models with.

Google published details about the Quan-

tum Echoes algorithm in the scientific journal Nature on Wednesday.

(Reuters)

ANXIOUS to bolster its air power, Turkey has proposed to European partners and the U.S. ways it could swiftly obtain advanced fighter jets as it seeks to make up ground on regional rivals such as Israel, sources familiar with the talks say.

NATO-member Turkey, which has the alliance's second-largest military, aims to leverage its best relations with the West in years to add to its ageing fleet 40 Eurofighter Typhoons, for which it inked a preliminary agreement in July, and later also U.S.-made F-35 jets, despite Washington sanctions that currently block any deal.

Strikes by Israel - the Middle East's most advanced military with hundreds of U.S.-supplied F-15, F-16 and F-35 fighters - on Turkey's neighbours Iran and Syria, as well as on Lebanon and Qatar, unnerved Ankara in the last year. They laid bare key vulnerabilities, prompting its push for rapid air power reinforcement to counter any potential threats and not be left exposed, officials say.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has sharply criticised Israel's attacks on Gaza and elsewhere in the Middle East and once warm relations between the two countries have sunk to new lows. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned that Turkey's bases, rebel allies and support for the army in Syria posed a threat to Israel.

Greece, a largely symbolic but sensitive threat for Turkey, is expected to receive a batch of advanced F-35s in the next three years. In years past, jets from the two NATO states engaged in scattered dogfights over the Aegean, and Greece has previously expressed concerns about Turkish military build-up.

TURKEY WOULD BUY SECOND-HAND PLANES TO GET THEM FAST

For the Typhoons, Turkey is nearing a deal with Britain and other European countries in which it would promptly receive 12 of them, albeit used, from previous buyers Qatar and Oman to meet its immediate needs, accord-

Turkey pressing for Western fighter jets to claw back regional edge

ing to a person familiar with the matter.

Eurofighter consortium members Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain would approve the second-hand sale proposal, in which they would provide Turkey with 28 new jets in coming years pending a final purchase agreement, the person said.

Erdogan is expected to discuss the proposal on visits to Qatar and Oman on Wednesday and Thursday, with jet numbers, pricing, and timelines the main issues.

Erdogan is then expected to host British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz later this month, when agreements could be sealed, sources say.

A UK government spokesperson told Reuters that a memorandum of understanding that Britain and Turkey signed in July paves the way "for a multibillion-pound order of up to 40 aircraft," adding: "We look forward to agreeing the final contracting details soon."

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl, who was in Ankara last week, said Berlin supported the jets purchase and later told broadcaster NTV that a deal could follow within the year.

Turkey's defence ministry said no final agreement had been reached and that talks with Britain were moving in a positive direction, adding other consortium members backed the procurement. Qatar and Oman did not immediately comment.

TURKEY, US HAVE POLITICAL WILL TO RESOLVE ISSUES

Acquiring the advanced F-35s has proven trickier for Ankara, which has been barred from buying them since 2020 when Washington slapped it with CAATSA sanctions over its purchase of Russian S-400 air defences.

Erdogan failed to make headway on the issue at a White House meeting with President Donald Trump last month. But Turkey



▲ Kizilelma, an unmanned fighter aircraft developed by Turkish defence firm Baykar, stands on the deck of the TCG Anadolu, Turkey's first amphibious assault ship, alongside other drones and army helicopters during the Teknofest Blue Homeland event at the Naval Shipyard Command, in Istanbul, Turkey.

still aims to capitalise on the two leaders' good personal ties, and Erdogan's help convincing Palestinian militant group Hamas to sign Trump's Gaza ceasefire agreement, to eventually reach a deal.

Separate sources have said that Ankara considered proposing a plan that could have included a U.S. presidential "waiver" to overcome the CAATSA sanctions and pave the way for an eventual resolution of the S-400 issue and F-35 purchase.

Turkey's possession of the S-400s remains the main obstacle to purchasing F-35s, but Ankara and Washington have publicly stated a desire to overcome this, saying the allies have the political will to do so.

The potential temporary waiver, if given, could help Ankara increase defence cooperation with Washington and possibly build sympathy in a U.S. Congress that has been sceptical of Turkey in the past, the sources said.

"Both sides know that resolving CAATSA needs to be done. Whether it is a presidential waiver or a congressional decision, that is up to the United States," Harun Armagan, vice chair of foreign affairs for Erdogan's ruling AK Party, told Reuters.

"It looks awkward with all of the other diplomacy and cooperation happening at the same time."

Turkey's foreign ministry did not respond to questions about floating a waiver to U.S. counterparts or discussions on resolving the S-400 issue. The White House did not immediately comment on whether Ankara raised a waiver option.

A State Department spokesperson said Trump recognizes Turkey's strategic importance and that "his administration is seeking creative solutions to all of these pending issues," but did not elaborate further.

(Reuters)

Louvre chief blames CCTV gaps for \$102 million jewellery heist

THE Louvre's cameras failed to detect burglars in time to prevent their audacious daylight heist of some of France's crown jewels, the museum's director said on Wednesday, amid growing anger directed at officials over major security lapses.

The thieves broke into the world-famous Paris museum on Sunday using a crane to smash an upstairs window, then stole jewels worth an estimated 88 million euros (\$102 million) before escaping on motorbikes. News of the robbery reverberated around the world, and prompted soul-searching in France over what some viewed as a national humiliation.

Laurence des Cars, the Louvre director, told senators that she had offered her resignation, but it had been refused by Culture Minister Rachida Dati, who has also come under fire as recriminations flew after the robbery.

SECURITY EFFORTS 'DEFEATED'

"Despite our efforts, despite our hard work every day, we were defeated," Des Cars told a Senate committee.

Many in France and around the world have been baffled how four hooded assailants were able to drive up to the world's most visited museum, smash a second-floor window and make off with a handsome booty without getting caught. Ministers have admitted serious security lapses occurred.

The exterior security cameras do not offer full coverage of the museum's facade, she said, adding that the window through which the thieves broke in was not monitored by



▲ Visitors take pictures of the painting "Mona Lisa" (La Joconde) by Leonardo da Vinci at the Louvre Museum on the day it reopened to the public for the first time since last Sunday's heist, while the Galerie d'Apollon where eight pieces of Napoleon and the Empress's jewelry collection displayed in the gallery were stolen by thieves, remains closed, in Paris, France,

CCTV.

Des Cars said she had repeatedly warned that the centuries-old building's security was in a dire state. "The warnings I had been sounding came horribly true last Sunday."

She pledged to establish no-parking perimeters in areas around the Louvre, upgrade the CCTV network and ask the interior ministry to set up a police station inside the museum.

FOUR OTHER FRENCH MUSEUMS

ROBBED RECENTLY

The heist, on a Sunday morning after the Louvre had already opened to visitors, has prompted an assessment of security at museums across the country. Paris is home to some of the world's best-known cultural institutions, including museums like Orsay, Pompidou and Quai Branly which help sustain booming tourism.

At least four French museums have been robbed over the last two months, according

to media reports.

On Tuesday, prosecutors said they had charged a Chinese-born woman over the theft of six gold nuggets worth about 1.5 million euros (\$1.75 million) from the Museum of Natural History in Paris last month. She was arrested in Barcelona while trying to dispose of some melted gold, they said.

(Reuters)

5 stars ready to light up Phakama Music Festival

THE vibrant spirit of Eswatini’s music scene is set to shine brightly on the regional stage as five of its top artists join the highly anticipated Phakama Music Festival 2025 in South Africa.

This landmark event, scheduled for November 1–2, 2025, at 116 Montana Gardens, Ngwenya Estate, White River in Mpumalanga, is set to be a spectacular celebration of African music, culture, and creativity, drawing crowds from across the continent.

Representing Eswatini at this prestigious festival are five standout performers who have made significant waves in the local music industry. These include DJ Cybos, DJ Tibza, Sbu De Drum DJ, Zulu D, and Young Zesh.

These artists will share the stage with a dynamic lineup of South African and regional stars, including Morda, Oscar Mbo, Lwa Ndlunkulu, Mbuso Khoza, Fistaz Mixwell, Phumla Music, Jabulile Majola, Shakes & Les, Mpo Les, and DJ Benny from Mozambique.

Now in its third edition, the Phakama Music Festival has quickly earned a reputation as a premier cultural event in Southern Africa. Organisers proudly describe it as “the Coachella of Mpumalanga,” highlighting its role as a vibrant platform that celebrates African creativity, heritage, and cultural tourism. The festival goes beyond music, incorporating fine art exhibitions, sculpting displays, workshops, and an entrepreneurial marketplace that showcases local crafts and innovations.

One of the exciting new features of the 2025 festival is the introduction of a camping experience, allowing attendees to immerse themselves fully in the festival atmosphere under the expansive Mpumalanga skies. This addition promises to enhance the communal spirit of the event, offering a unique way to connect with fellow music lovers and artists alike.

Tickets for the Phakama Music Festival 2025 are priced from E450 and are available at major outlets including Howler, Shoprite, Checkers, U Save, and House & Home. For those interested in the camping experience or seeking further information, organisers have provided a contact number: +27 82 715 5810.



▲ Young Zesh will be performing at the Phakama Music Festival.

Gogo Eswatini & S’lwane to host men’s mental health camp

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

POPULAR comedians and social influencers Gogo Eswatini and S’lwane are set to host a transformative men’s only event titled “Mfowethu uGrend?” from November 28 to 30, 2025.

The camp, hosted at a private location, is powered by a partnership with the Eswatini Psychology Association and will feature specialists in financial health, men’s reproductive and sexual health, as well as relationship and marriage counselling.

This pioneering camp aims to bring together men from across the nation to openly discuss, reflect on, and seek solutions for the complex mental health challenges they face. Inspired by the philosophical belief that healing a man contributes to healing future generations, Gogo Eswatini and S’lwane have crafted this event as a sanctuary for men to confront mental health struggles head-on. The duo, who recently gained widespread attention for their viral “Lugodvo Kimi” trend and engaging TikTok comedy, are leveraging their influence to spark meaningful change beyond entertainment.

S’lwane explained the impetus behind the camp. “We looked within ourselves, searched within our own families and communities. We read newspapers, saw it on TV and heard about it on the radio. Worse, even our social media timelines are littered with it, from the attempted suicides to the completed ones, to the sexual and gender-based violence. The



▲ Popular comedians and social influencers Gogo Eswatini and S’lwane.

red flags are all over us, unmistakable. The crisis that is men’s mental ill-health is one we feel we can no longer ignore.”

The camp will assemble a diverse panel of Eswatini’s leading mental health professionals, social workers, pastors, and men who have personally navigated mental health challenges. Their combined expertise will create a supportive environment where participants can share experiences, learn coping strategies, and foster collective healing. Gogo Eswatini emphasised the responsibility

ty that comes with public influence.

“At some point, one feels like their influence is pointless if it is not fully leveraged to help better the lives of the people who make us what we are as influencers or public figures. Particularly, in such a troubled world as ours lately, every other weekend we are either burying a friend or a relative due to suicide, or we are reading in the papers that Man X has butchered Woman X, which to us will always be troubling.”

Da Mabusa, Khadeair headline Ladies Thursday Night

MDZIMBA View Shisanyama, in collaboration with Dlalamanadzi Events, is set to host an electrifying Ladies Thursday Night on October 23, 2025.

Headlining this much-anticipated event are South African sensations Da Mabusa and Khadeair, the renowned ‘Magumba’ hit maker, whose dynamic performances have captivated audiences across the region.

The event is designed as a vibrant tribute to women, with Mdzimba View Shisanyama’s official Facebook page inviting ladies to “shine” and enjoy a night filled with top-tier entertainment. The venue, known for its lively atmosphere and excellent hospitality, will transform into a pulsating hub of rhythm and style, where guests can enjoy fine wine, great music, and a sophisticated yet relaxed vibe under a smart casual dress code.

Beyond the headliners, the night will feature an impressive roster of local artists who will keep the momentum going from start to finish. Performers such as Ayacity, Lady Zee, Culolam, Sgitha, Baba, Tap Tap, Virus, King Sabza, Mawillies, Sbuda, Castle, Maten Ten, Slim Deep, Zaimarn, Skyloe, and Mdura will showcase a diverse range of styles and sounds, ensuring there is something for every music lover in attendance.

Da Mabusa, born Johan Sifiso Sithebe in Kwamhlanga, Mpumalanga, has risen from humble beginnings in a clap and tap choir in 2007 to become a powerhouse in South Africa’s music industry. His breakthrough hit

“Umama Owangizalayo,” released in 2022, achieved triple gold status, marking him as a formidable independent artist. His EP “Izipho” and the single “Syeke” further cemented his reputation for delivering soulful, energetic performances that resonate deeply with fans.

Khadeair, on the other hand, has gained widespread acclaim as the Magumba hit-maker, known for his infectious beats and innovative style that have swept through Southern Africa’s music scene. His ability to blend traditional rhythms with contemporary sounds creates an irresistible energy that promises to keep the crowd moving all night long.



▲ South African sensations Da Mabusa and Khadea.

Nothando Hlophe's "Methodist Medley" hits 450,000 YouTube views

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

NOTHANDO Hlophe, one of Eswatini's most beloved gospel artists, has once again captured the hearts of worshippers and music lovers alike with her latest single, "Methodist Medley."

This soulful track, featured on her recently released album 'A New Dawn,' has now surpassed an impressive milestone of 450,000 views on YouTube, affirming its widespread impact and the deep connection it has forged with audiences.

The recording of "Methodist Medley" took place during a live session at the Mavuso Trade Centre on June 7, 2025, as part of the vibrant launch event for 'A New Dawn.'

The album itself is a testament to Nothando's spiritual journey, blending heartfelt worship with contemporary gospel sounds. "Methodist Medley" follows the success of another powerful track from the album, "Sithumela Wena," which has already garnered over 330,000 views on YouTube, further solidifying Nothando's place as a leading voice in gospel music.

What makes "Methodist Medley"

particularly special is its deep roots in Nothando's personal faith history. The song is a loving tribute to the hymns she grew up singing in the Methodist Church, a foundation that shaped her early spiritual life. By weaving together these timeless melodies with modern gospel arrangements, Nothando created a bridge between tradition and contemporary worship, evoking nostalgia while inspiring renewed faith.

In discussing the song's meaning, Nothando Hlophe shared that the hymns are far more than mere songs to her; they reflect her identity and a gateway to cherished childhood memories of Sunday mornings filled with prayer and harmony. "These hymns carry the essence of my faith journey," she explained. "They remind me of God's faithfulness throughout my life and the comfort that comes from His presence."

At its heart, "Methodist Medley" is a prayer for divine protection and guidance.

The lyrics speak to the universal human experience of navigating life's uncertainties and the solace found in trusting God's sheltering presence. Nothando emphasised the song's message of hope, stating, "We all go through seasons of uncertainty, but His presence is our constant shelter. I want this song to remind people that they are never alone, God is with them, always."



▲ One of Eswatini's most beloved gospel artists Nothando Hlophe.

Voting lines open for Miss Cultural Heritage Eswatini 2025/26 Top 12 finalists

THE excitement is building across Eswatini as voting lines officially open for the Top 12 finalists of the Miss Cultural Heritage Eswatini 2025/26 edition.

This event marks a pivotal moment in the celebration of the nation's rich cultural heritage, inviting the public to participate actively in selecting the next cultural ambassador. On October 17, 2025, the Eswatini National Council of Arts and Culture (ENCAC) announced the finalists during a formal ceremony at the Mountain View Hotel in Mbabane. The occasion was attended by the Honourable Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs, Bongani Nzima, who highlighted the importance of the pageant in fostering cultural pride and unity among Eswatini's youth.

The finalists representing the Hhohho Region are Thubelihle Mnisi, Vuyile Dlamini, and Andile Kunene. From the Manzini Region, the finalists include Nobuhle Shabangu, Yoliswa Manana, and Ayanda Dlamini. Wethu Mavuso, Sipehelele Dlamini, and Sinenkhosi Dlamini represent the Shiselweni Region. Lastly, the Lubombo Region's finalists are Takitsi Mamba, Zethu Magagula, and Siphesihle Gwebu.

Miss Cultural Heritage Eswatini stands apart from typical beauty contests by focusing on cultural preservation and appreciation. Contestants are judged on their ability to embody and promote Eswatini's traditions, including traditional attire, music, dance, and culinary arts. This approach ensures that the pageant serves as a platform for cultural education and celebration, encouraging con-



▲ Miss Cultural Heritage Eswatini 2025 Finalists

testants and audiences alike to embrace the nation's heritage.

The pageant's emphasis on culture over mere aesthetics makes it a unique event that strengthens national identity and promotes the country's diverse customs and practices. The grand finale is scheduled for November 8, 2025, at The George Hotel, beginning at 5 pm. The event promises a spectacular evening filled with cultural performances, displays of traditional artistry, and the crowning of the new Miss Cultural Heritage Eswatini.

It will be a gathering of families, cultural enthusiasts, dignitaries, and media, all united in celebrating Eswatini's vibrant heritage.

Last year's winner, Gcinizwi Tsikati, was crowned at the Mlawula Camp Fire Festival, a lively event that showcased the beauty and diversity of Eswatini's cultural traditions. Her reign was marked by active community involvement and efforts to raise cultural awareness, setting a high standard for this year's contestants.

Portia Praise to host 'Intentional Praise' album launch

MANZINI is poised for a night of spiritual awakening and musical celebration as renowned Eswatini gospel artist Portia Praise prepares to launch her debut solo album, 'Intentional Praise.'

The event is scheduled for November 1, 2025. It will take place at the iconic GPI Manzini (formerly YeSive Supermarket), promising an evening filled with heartfelt worship, powerful melodies, and a deep connection to faith.

Portia Praise is not just a singer; she is a beacon of hope and a storyteller whose songs weave narratives of faith, perseverance, and divine grace.

Her journey as a gospel artist is deeply rooted in her service at Gospel Powerhouse International (GPI), under the visionary leadership of Pastor N. Malaza. Here, Portia has honed her craft, channelling her spirituality into music that awakens worship and touches the soul.

Her music transcends mere entertainment, serving as a ministry that reaches into the hearts of listeners, inspiring them to embrace faith with renewed vigour. The upcoming album, 'Intentional Praise,' is a testament to this mission, each track crafted with purpose and passion to encourage intentional worship and spiritual reflection.

In September 2025, Portia released the single "Ukhona Nkulunkulu," a song that quickly captured the hearts of many across the Kingdom of Eswatini. The track, which translates to "God Is Present," eloquently expresses the trials and triumphs of everyday life, offering a message of hope and reassurance to those facing challenges. Its widespread acclaim has set a powerful precedent for the album launch, generating anticipation among fans and new listeners alike.

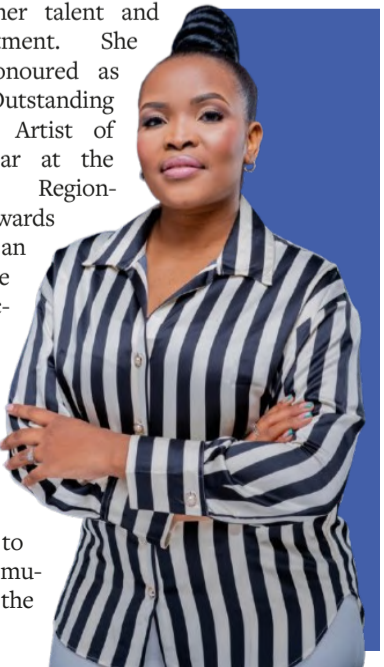
Portia Praise's artistry is distinguished by her unique ability to blend soulful sounds with bold, creative expression.

Her music is not confined to the stage; it intersects with broader social themes, including tourism and community development. This holistic approach positions gospel music as both a spiritual ministry and a catalyst for social transformation.

Her performances have become a staple at major events, including the Mother of All Gospel Shows, the EIPA Official Opening, the International Trade Fair 2024, and One Voice South Africa. Sharing stages with gospel legends such as Bishop Benjamin Dube, Takie Ndou, Canaan Nyathi, Sbu Noah, and Nduduzo Matse, Portia has consistently demonstrated her prowess and passion.

Portia Praise's journey is decorated with significant achievements that underscore her talent and commitment. She was honoured as the Outstanding Female Artist of the Year at the NACA Regional Awards

2024, an accolade that recognises her exceptional contribution to gospel music in the region.



Musa Khawula slapped with defamation letter

CELEBRITY blogger Musa Khawula has once again found himself embroiled in controversy.

The controversial “Pope of Pop Culture,” who recently apologized publicly to businessman Groovin Nchabeleng, is now involved in a defamation battle with actress and influencer Lerato Nxumalo.

Through her lawyers at Nuñez Attorneys Inc., the former Scandal! and Durban Gen star has sent a demand letter accusing Khawula of publishing a “false, defamatory, and privacy-invading” post that incorrectly identified a Swedish man named Tobias Pettersson as her spouse.

Nxumalo, who married in secret in September, has made it clear that she is not going to take this one lightly.

On October 15, Khawula dropped a “breaking” post to his 250 000-plus followers on X (formerly Twitter), claiming to have unmasked Nxumalo’s secret spouse.

“I found out who the man is,” he bragged, attaching a photo of Pettersson.

Within hours, social media sleuths went wild, flooding the man’s Instagram with messages and friend requests.

Two days later, Nxumalo hit back: “We are not taking this lightly,” she wrote on Instagram, calling out the blogger for violating her privacy and dragging her family into the chaos.

Fans rallied behind her with heart emojis



▲ Celebrity blogger Musa Khawula has once again found himself embroiled in controversy.

and “slay queen” comments, while others criticised Khawula for what they called “digital harassment”.

On Tuesday, Nxumalo’s lawyers sent Khawula a formal cease-and-desist letter, demanding that he delete all related posts

across his platforms within 24 hours.

In addition, the letter cited the Protection from Harassment Act (2011) and the Protection of Personal Information Act, threatening severe repercussions if he did not comply, such as a 72-hour public apology, defamation litigation, and potential fines or jail time.

Khawula responded in a defiant manner by reposting the letter on his X timeline, thereby transforming the legal notice into content specifically for his followers.

“Lerato Nxumalo had sent a letter of demand through her lawyers,” he captioned, sparking another round of divided opinions.

Nxumalo later disclosed that Pettersson received an unwelcome spike in attention as a result of Khawula’s post.

“He’s being bombarded by strangers online,” she vented in a follow-up post.

String of legal battles

The actress, who has consistently maintained her privacy in her personal life, expressed that the incident transcended from mere gossip to actual harassment.

For Khawula, this is yet another entry in a growing list of legal battles.

Earlier in October, he publicly apologised to Connie Ferguson and Groovin Nchabeleng after falsely linking them romantically.

In 2024, he faced cyberbullying charges and multiple bail denials. Even a short stint behind bars has not slowed him down.

(IOL)



Crown Gospel Awards return to Durban after Joburg fallout

THE Crown Gospel Awards will be returning back to its home of origin, Durban after terminating a seven year contract within two years in Johannesburg.

This year the event will be held on Sunday, November 23 2025, at the Durban ICC Convention Centre.

In 2023, the awards secured a seven-year agreement with the The Gauteng provincial government. This included the Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture, and the agreement was to host the awards at Gallagher Convention Centre in Johannesburg. Co-founder and Ukhozi FM presenter Zanele Mbokazi-Nkambule, who has since passed on, said at the time, the seven-year relationship represented an exciting new chapter for the awards. She founded the awards in 2008 to celebrate the best in Gospel music in South Africa.

On August 12 2024 Mbokazi-Nkambule met her untimely death following a battle with lung cancer. She passed away at Parklands Hospital in Durban.

“This is the beginning of something big, a solid relationship,” she said addressing the media at the Johannesburg launch.

Since Mbokazi-Nkambule’s passing, the awards have been wrestling to maintain the established status which she created.

Her husband, Bishop Mpendulo Brian Nkambule, still wishes to continue his wife’s legacy and vision for the awards.

“The impact she had, is still felt. Her voice will not be silenced even in her absence.”

The awards have relocated back to Durban due to “a number of reasons”. These include supposed over-promising and under-delivering from some of the financial supporters.

“We had hoped to continue and complete the seven years. However, Durban is the heartbeat of the Crowns,” Pastor S’tthemiso Mtshali said. He is the official spokesperson for the Crown Gospel Music Awards. “That is where we started. And returning in Durban was not part of the plan as yet. However, it only made sense. The fans wanted us to go back home, and Durban Arts and Culture really wanted us to return to our roots.”

The event has successfully Gospel artists for their contribution in spreading the Gospel through music. This they did over a period of 17 years. Tickets for this year’s 18th Annual Crown Gospel Music Awards are now officially on sale. And nominees will be announced at the end of October, after over 890 entries had been received.

“We are excited to be back where it all began,” Mtshali said.

(Sunday World)

Somizi denies unpaid salary and asset seizure claims

POPULAR multi-media personality, Somizi Mhlongo, has hit back at serious claims in the media, saying that they are “completely false and misleading”.

This comes after “Sunday World” published an article claiming that a sheriff was on the hunt for Mhlongo and his business partner, Lindo Maleho, over unpaid salaries from their cleaning services company, Search Light (Pty) Ltd.

The article included details about how the sheriff allegedly attempted to visit a Sandton location on several dates,

only to find the place empty.

The report also stated that the sheriff was authorised to attach and sell off the company’s movable assets through a public auction to recover R165,402.62, plus interest.

Thabiso Putswhe, Hotellica union representative, was quoted in the article saying: “We are now exploring other avenues to seize their assets as per the enforcement order. And we know they may still have an office at the Carlton Centre. And we believe there could be attachable assets there.”

However, Mhlongo didn’t let the allegations go unchecked. He quickly took to Instagram to set the record straight.

“I would like to clearly state that the company referred to in the article does not belong to me, has never been registered under my name, and I have no association with it whatsoever.

The claims made are completely false and misleading,” he wrote.

He further expressed his feelings about the media’s responsibility to be accurate.

“It is deeply concerning that such misinformation is published without proper verification, as it has the potential to harm reputations and mislead the public.

“I urge media outlets to uphold the principles of accuracy and accountability when reporting,” ended the statement.

(IOL)



Sphamandla Dhludhlu joins iThonga

SOUTH African television fans have a new reason to tune in as talented actor Sphamandla Dhludhlu takes on the role of Captain Mandla Mchunu in the gripping weekday telenovela iThonga.

Known for his versatility and depth, Dhludhlu promises to bring a perfect balance of strength, vulnerability, and intensity to the small screen.

When asked about his reaction to being cast as, Dhludhlu said it felt like “a blessing and a challenge.”

For him, playing a layered character like Captain Mchunu, a tough cop with a big heart, was a dream come true. “I’ve always wanted to play a character who is both powerful and vulnerable,” he told Sunday World.

iThonga has been described as a dark and intense drama, full of suspense, emotion, and unexpected twists. Dhludhlu assures viewers that the series delivers on all fronts. “Every episode pulls you in deeper. You’ll see real stories, real emotions, and a few twists you won’t see coming,” he said.

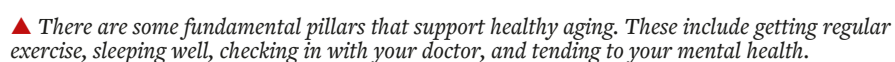
(Sunday World)

▲ Popular multi-media personality, Somizi Mhlongo.

In this article, we offer some nutrition tips for older adults.

Older adults experience a natural, progressive loss of muscle mass called sarcopenia. Maintaining muscle mass is key to retaining strength, which is in turn

Older adults have different nutritional needs than younger individuals. This is due to factors such as age-related physical changes, changes in metabolism and activity level, and the risk of chronic health conditions. By learning your individual nutritional needs, planning your meals, and addressing potential deficiencies, you can meet your body's nutritional needs as you age. (**Healthline**)





IT'S common knowledge that fruit is one of the staples of a healthy diet.

It's incredibly nutritious and packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber. Fruit has even been associated with reduced risks of heart disease and diabetes.

However, it contains more natural sugars than other whole foods like vegetables. For this reason, many people question whether it's good for your waistline.

This article looks at the potential effects of fruit on weight to determine whether it's weight loss friendly or fattening.

Fruit is low in calories and high in nutrients

Fruit is a nutrient-dense food, meaning it is low in calories but high in nutrients like vitamins, minerals and fiber.

One large orange can meet 163% of your daily needs for vitamin C, an essential component of immune health.

On the other hand, a medium banana provides 12% of the potassium you need in a day, which helps regulate the activity of your nerves, muscles and heart (5, 6).

Fruits are also high in antioxidants, which help protect the body from oxidative stress and may lower the risk of certain chronic diseases like cancer and diabetes.

What's more, they also contain fiber, which can promote regularity, improve gut health and increase feelings of fullness).

And because fruits are low in calories, including them in your diet may help decrease your daily calorie intake, all while providing essential nutrients.

For example, one small apple contains just 77 calories, yet provides nearly 4 grams of fiber, which is up to 16% of the amount you need for the day.

Other fruits are similarly low in calories. For instance, a half cup (74 grams) of blueberries contains 42 calories, while a half cup (76 grams) of grapes provides 52 calories.

Using low-calorie foods like fruit to replace higher-calorie foods can help create a calorie deficit, which is necessary for weight loss.

A calorie deficit occurs when you expend more calories than you take in. This forces your body to use up stored calories, mostly in the form of fat, which causes weight loss.

Snacking on whole fruits instead of high-calorie candies, cookies and chips can significantly reduce calorie intake and promote weight loss.

Fruit can keep you feeling full

In addition to being low in calories, fruit is also incredibly filling thanks to its water and fiber contents.

Fiber moves through your body slowly and increases digestion time, which leads to a feeling of fullness.

Some studies have suggested that fiber can also lead to reductions in appetite and food intake.

Does fruit help you lose weight?



In one study, eating a high-fiber meal reduced appetite, food intake and blood sugar in healthy men.

Other research shows that increased fiber intake can help promote weight loss and reduce the risk of weight and fat gain.

A 2005 study found that taking fiber supplements in combination with a low-calorie diet caused significantly greater weight loss than a low-calorie diet alone.

Additionally, fruit has a high water content. This allows you to eat a large volume of it and feel full, yet take in very few calories.

One small study found that eating foods with a higher water content led to a greater increase in fullness, lower calorie intake and reduced hunger, compared to drinking water while eating.

Due to their high fiber and water contents, fruits like apples and oranges are among the top foods on the satiety index, a tool designed to measure how filling foods are.

Incorporating whole fruits in your diet could keep you feeling full, which may help reduce your calorie intake and increase weight loss.

Fruit intake is associated with weight loss

Several studies have found an association between fruit intake and weight loss.

One massive study followed

133,468 adults over a 24-year span and found that fruit intake was associated with a greater weight loss over time. Apples and berries seemed to have the greatest effect on weight.

Another smaller study in 2010 found that obese and overweight dieters who increased their fruit intake experienced greater weight loss.

Fruit is also high in fiber, which has been associated with increased weight loss.

One study followed 252 women over 20 months and found that those who ate more fiber had a lower risk of gaining weight and body fat than participants who ate less fiber.

Another study showed that participants who took fiber supplements experienced decreased body weight, body fat and waist circumference, compared to those in the control group.

Fruit is a staple component of a whole-food diet, which has been shown to increase weight loss in its own right.

One small study showed that participants who ate a whole-food, plant-based diet experienced significantly decreased body weight and blood cholesterol, compared to those in the control group.

Keep in mind that these studies show an association between eating fruit and weight loss, but that does not necessarily mean that one caused the other.

Further studies are needed to determine how much of a direct role

fruit itself may have on weight.

Fruit contains natural sugars

The natural sugars found in fruit are very different from the added sugars typically found in processed foods. The two types can have very different health effects.

Added sugar has been associated with a range of potential health problems, including obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

The most common types of added sugar are two simple sugars called glucose and fructose. Sweeteners like table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup are a combination of both type.

Fruits contain a mixture of fructose, glucose and sucrose. When eaten in large amounts, fructose can be harmful and may contribute to issues like obesity, liver disease and heart problems.

For this reason, many people looking to eat less sugar mistakenly believe that they need to eliminate fruit from their diet.

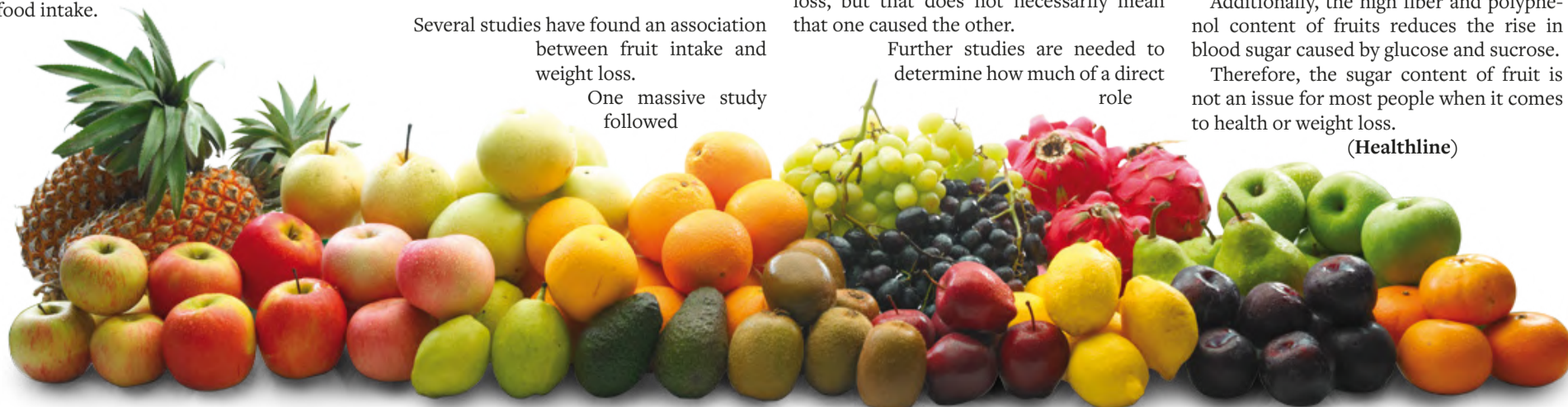
However, it's important to distinguish between the massive amount of fructose found in added sugars and the small amounts found in fruits.

Fructose is only harmful in larger amounts, and it would be very difficult to eat enough fruit to reach these amounts.

Additionally, the high fiber and polyphenol content of fruits reduces the rise in blood sugar caused by glucose and sucrose.

Therefore, the sugar content of fruit is not an issue for most people when it comes to health or weight loss.

(Healthline)



NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ A group of respondents reporting to their hearings watch a federal immigration officer walking past them at a U.S. immigration court in Manhattan, New York City.



▲ A visitor takes a picture of the painting “La Liberté guidant le peuple” (Liberty Leading the People, 1830) by French artist Eugene Delacroix (1798–1863) displayed in the salle Mollien of Denon wing at the Louvre Museum on the day it reopened to the public for the first time since last Sunday’s heist



▲ Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) and other officials listen as President Trump speaks during a Rose Garden Club lunch, at the White House in Washington.



▲ Taiwanese opera singer Wei Hai-min performs on a raft inside Zhaishan Tunnel during the annual Kinmen Tunnel Music Festival in Kinmen, Taiwan.



▲ Police officers stand in front of people protesting outside 26 Federal Plaza (Jacob K. Javits Federal Building), where migrants who were detained during a raid in Lower Manhattan by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) were brought in, in Manhattan, New York City.

Chippa United axe Eymael, confirm Vilakazi's return

Struggling Betway Premiership side Chippa United have confirmed the departure of head coach Luc Eymael.

The Belgian coach leaves the Chilli Boys after just seven games in charge of the Gqeberha-based outfit and only winning one of those matches. He leaves the club languishing at the bottom of the log with only six points after 10 games.

Chippa confirmed Eymael's exit via a short statement published on the club's social media accounts on Wednesday. In the same statement, the club also confirmed the return of Vusumuzi "Kanu" Vilakazi as their new head coach.

"Chippa United FC confirms a mutual separation with Head Coach Luc Eymael. We thank him for his professionalism and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

"We are pleased to welcome back Kanu Vilakazi as the new Head Coach. Familiar with our Club's values and ambitions, he is well-placed to lead us forward in the Betway Premiership League.

"To our loyal supporters — thank you for your belief and encouragement. We promise to bounce back stronger as the Chilli Boys," read the club statement.



▲ Chippa United have confirmed the departure of head coach Luc Eymael.

Eymael becomes the fourth coach to be axed by Chippa this season after the club parted ways with Sinenhamba Badela who was sacked after only two games. Badela was followed by Musa Nyatama and Morgan Gould on the exit door. The two coaches lasted one match each

before being fired.

Vilakazi, who briefly held the technical director and assistant coach role at Chippa in September 2023, will be hoping that he changes the club's fortunes and last longer in the job.

(Supersport)

Dyche outlines Forest vision on return to City Ground

SEAN Dyche said taking charge of Nottingham Forest for the first time on Thursday 'rounds the circle' of his career having been an apprentice at the City Ground in the days of the club's greatest ever manager Brian Clough.

The 54-year-old became Forest's third manager this season when he was named as successor to Ange Postecoglou who was sacked 39 days after replacing Nuno Espirito Santo.

Former Watford, Burnley and Everton manager Dyche's main focus will be arresting Forest's Premier League slide but he starts with a Europa League tie at home to Porto on Thursday.

Addressing media for the first time on Wednesday, Dyche said he takes a great deal of pleasure in managing the two-time European champions with whom his career began as a youth team player in the late 1980s.

"I have a longer history with the club from 87 to 90 and remember walking down the river (Trent) and Del Boy (Brian Clough's dog) running past you and the voice of Brian Clough in earshot," Dyche told reporters.

"All the legends that played at that time and there were some top players, and you know, you're thinking I just want to pull that shirt on, and now to round the circle and be here as manager is something quite big for me. But I'm not just here for a fun time, there's a job to be done."

Dyche, who parted ways with Everton in January after two years at the helm, will be assisted by former Forest players Ian Woan, Steve Stone, Tony Loughlan and Billy Mercer.

"They've got a deeper history than me here but obviously it's fast forward now, it's a considerably different club."

Under the pragmatic Espirito Santo, Forest finished seventh last season in the Premier League after challenging for the Champions League places. Postecoglou's more expansive approach failed dismally, so Dyche, known for his direct style of play, was asked what Forest fans can expect from him.

"We've got to get back to winning ways," Dyche, whose only previous experience of managing a club in a European tie was a Europa League play-off in 2018 with Burnley, said.

"They weren't winning at the end of last season after they perhaps ran out of steam and it's not been a great start this season. But this is a good group, a very talented group and they showed that willingness and desire last season to the world.

"Now we have to reignite that."

On the current fashion for set pieces and long throws, Dyche said there were many ways to win a game.

"I did a podcast with (former Stoke City manager) Tony Pulis and Tony is now being lauded for long throws, but before he was getting hammered for long throws. It's the fashion of football, it changes all the time. I'm not pontificating one way or the other, the bit I like is when you win."

(Supersport)

Djokovic pulls out of Paris Masters

NOVAK Djokovic announced on Tuesday he would miss the upcoming Paris Masters, but added he hoped to compete at the tournament next year.

Djokovic has not played an official match since going down to then-world number 204 Valentin Vacherot in the semifinals of the Shanghai Masters earlier in October.

The 38-year-old struggled physically throughout that match, throwing up courtside and receiving medical treatment multiple times.

"Dear Paris, unfortunately I'll not compete at this year's (tournament)," the 24-time Grand Slam winner said on social media.

"I have amazing memories and great success over the years, especially being able to conquer the title 7 times. Novak Djokovic will not play the final ATP Masters 1000 event of the season for the second year running.

The 24-time major winner announced Tuesday that he had withdrawn from the Rolex Paris Masters, which begins Sunday in its first year at La Defense Arena.

"Dear Paris, unfortunately I'll not compete at this year's @RolexPMasters. I have amazing memories and great success over the years, especially being able to conquer the title seven times. Hope to see you next year. Merci," he shared.

Djokovic previously noted at the Shanghai Rolex Masters earlier this month his non-committal to compete at a tour event again this season outside of the Hellenic Championship in Athens, where he now has a base. The ATP 250 event relocated from Belgrade this year, with Djokovic's brother Djordje serving as



▲ Novak Djokovic.

tournament director since 2021.

"Hope to see you next year."

Last week, Djokovic was forced to abandon his third place match against American Taylor Fritz at the Six Kings Slam in Saudi Arabia.

The Serbian skipped the Paris Masters last season as he has drastically reduced the number of tournaments in which he competes as he continues his quest for a record-breaking 25th major title.

World number 10 Holger Rune will also miss this year's Paris Masters, which runs from October 27 to November 2, after announcing he underwent an operation on his Achilles tendon.

"Surgery went really well... I will keep you updated on my recovery. But now rest and heal," the Dane posted Tuesday on Instagram.

(Supersport)



▲ Sean Dyche.

Gordon grateful for Mourinho praise after Newcastle beat Benfica

NEWCASTLE attacker Anthony Gordon said being lauded by Benfica boss Jose Mourinho after the Magpies' Champions League win at home to the Portuguese side on Tuesday was a "big compliment".

The 24-year-old England forward scored the first goal – his fourth in the competition in three games this season – and made the last in a 3-0 victory at St James' Park as the Magpies overwhelmed Benfica to the delight of a crowd of more than 52 000 people.

There were plaudits aplenty for Gordon following the game but it was the words of Mourinho, who went over to talk to the former Everton frontman on the final whistle, that really hit home.

Asked what the veteran Portuguese boss had told him, Gordon replied: "He said 'You're too much', which is a big compliment for me because as a kid, he was my favourite manager in the world growing up.

"It's quite weird because he was quite a defensive manager, but I just love the way... even then, the bench was getting up. He really creates a team environment, it's like us against the world. I recognise that from my own game, so it was a big compliment.

"It means an awful lot. Even if I didn't idolise him, a compliment from any coach at this level means a lot."

Newcastle climbed to seventh place in the table thanks to the victory with six points from their first three games.

Gordon broke the deadlock by turning in Jacob Murphy's inviting cross with 32 minutes gone and, after substitute Harvey Barnes had doubled Newcastle's lead 19 minutes from time, Gordon sent in Barnes for his second goal.

"I thought both our wingers that started the game did really well," said Newcastle manager Eddie Howe.



▲ Newcastle attacker Anthony Gordon.

"It was great to see them combine for the first goal, that's a really pleasing sight.

"Anthony played very direct and I thought athletically, he was excellent. He put a really big effort in both on and off the ball."

Gordon, meanwhile praised Nick Woltemade for the return pass played by the £69 million (\$92 million) Germany attacker in the build-up to Newcastle's third goal.

"I was unsure of his game style when he first came in, how it would

translate for me," said Gordon. "It's been unbelievable, to be honest. I didn't think it'd turn out as well as it has.

"He suits my game so well. He sees the little passes I do round the corner – that's my style of play as a winger. Not a lot of attackers can really play off that style, but some of his first touches, some of his little flicks – especially for third goal – that's top, top level."

(Supersport)

Colapinto accepts he must obey Alpine after ignoring orders

ALPINE'S Argentine Formula One driver Franco Colapinto has accepted he must obey team orders after defying them in Austin last weekend.

The 22-year-old overtook teammate Pierre Gasly for 17th place in the US Grand Prix despite being told by the team to stay behind the Frenchman. Gasly ended up 19th, behind Sauber's Gabriel Bortoleto.

"The team situation on Sunday has been discussed internally and it is clear that instructions by the team must always be followed no matter what," Colapinto said in a team preview for Sunday's Mexico City Grand Prix.

"We are all together, and we are all working towards the same goal to keep getting better with each session and each race weekend."

Colapinto is the only driver on the starting grid yet to score a point after 19 races this season, with the Argentine replacing Australian Jack Doohan – also pointless – after the first six races.

Steve Nielsen, the Renault-

owned team's managing director, had said on Sunday night that there was plenty to review after the race in Austin, and was openly critical of Colapinto's behaviour.

"We gave the instruction for the drivers to maintain position as we were managing fuel with both cars and the added variable of the number of laps remaining with the leaders in close proximity," he explained.

"As a team, any instruction made by the pit wall is final and today we are disappointed that this didn't happen so it's something we will review and deal with internally."

Alpine have yet to confirm who will partner Gasly next year, although de facto principal Flavio Briatore said last month that it would be either Colapinto or Estonian reserve Paul Aron.

Aron will take Gasly's place for first Friday practice in Mexico City, putting him on track in the same session as Colapinto.

(Supersport)



▲ Alpine's Argentine Formula One driver Franco Colapinto.

Sunshine Tour shines a light on caddies

EVERY week, the Sunshine Tour showcases the men who grew up dreaming of greatness and who live out those dreams on the fairways. But this year, the Tour decided to also shine a light on the men or women who stand alongside them – the caddies.

At every prizegiving on the Sunshine Tour, the winning golfer's caddie is also welcomed forward and awarded a medallion in recognition of the role he or she played in that victory.

It's a public recognition of the people who are often in the background, but who work every bit as hard as their professionals. They rise just as early before dawn to get to the golf course. They spend just as much time away from home and loved ones. And they take just as much pleasure in their work, and the ultimate reward of victory.

"It's such a beautiful thing that the Sunshine Tour is doing. It's so inspiring. With the medallion handover people can see what we do as caddies," says Albert Mciteka, who has won two medallions this year

already with two different players in Pieter Moolman at the Limpopo Championship and Haydn Porteous at the Vodacom Origins of Golf at Gowrie Farm Lodge & Golf Course.

"It feels amazing to have achieved that, especially with two different players."

Behind every bag carried and yardage book done is a story.

Mciteka's story in golf began when he was still in primary school.

"I grew up in Stellenbosch and I've been caddieing since I was in primary school at Koelenhof Primary. I used to skip school just so that I could caddie and make some extra cash. And I just kept on going from there. I've been caddieing professionally for over 15 years now, on the Sunshine Tour and a bit on the DP World Tour.

"Golf means so much to me. I grew up with golf. There were one or two years where I worked because things were a bit tough, but I missed golf too much. I met Pieter Moolman five years ago and we just clicked, and we're still together now." (Supersport)





Stories by Chris Dlamini

THREE big names in the country's billiards or pool look set for the inaugural Sphana Investments-sponsored leagues.

Sphana sponsors three different leagues under the Manzini/Matsapha Zonal League chaired by Mhlaba 'Chester' Dlamini. They back the Open Singles, Masters League (50 years old and above) and Seniors League (40 years old and above).

All three competitions are in the second-round stage, but it now looks quite clear who the likely winners might be. In the Masters League, decorated former national team star Romeo Da Silva Cunha is comfortably at the summit with a six-point lead.

Da Silva even has a game in hand, having played 22. Second-placed Vusi Masilela has played 23 games and has 57 points to Da Silva's 63. If anything, Masilela has one game left to play in the 13-player league, which sees him finish under the leader who will likely take his tally to 69 in his last two games.

The only real threat for Da Silva is third-placed national team legend David 'Mdavu' Masuku, just as decorated as the former. The two achieved a lot of gold medals together while still teammates at the then Tinkers Pool Team and JazyZee Pool Team.

Top trio for Sphana Pool Leagues' titles

Masuku has 54 points after 21 matches. If he wins all his remaining five, it will give him an additional 15 points, tallying 69 points.

On the other hand, Da Silva only loses the title to Masuku if he loses his one of his two games. If he wins both, and Masuku also wins all four, frame difference will decide the champion, and as is, it favours the former.

Moving on to the Seniors League, Sandile Dlamini is leading on 69 points, level with Dumisani 'Dinho' Malindzisa after 27 and 28 games, respectively. However, it is the decorated national team legend Sithembiso 'Dodge' Marsebula, sitting on third with 63 points but 25 games, who is a real threat.

Matsebula looks set to topple the front two and reclaim the top spot he has held for prolonged periods of the league.

All Matsebula needs is to win his two pending fixtures to reclaim the summit. Judging by the fact that he has been at the helm for a long time, he looks on course for his second league title after winning the Billiards Singles League in Mbabane a



▲ Romeo da Silva.

fortnight ago. Meanwhile, Eddie 'Bharuka' Mondlane is still the player to catch in the Open Singles League, currently three points ahead of his closest competitor since the first round, Sonic Dlamini.



▲ Sithembiso 'Dodge' Matsebula.

The latter has played a game more than Mondlane but still trails him by three points. Mondlane and Dlamini still have 11 and 10 games to go before the championship is decided.

... Norman, Dodge for E20k pot game

WILL this be Norman Khoza's pot game?

This is the question that boggles the mind as Khoza will on Friday take on his arch-rival Sithembiso 'Dodge' Matsebula in yet another E20 000 pot game.

It is winner-takes-all as in the previous two pot matches between these two ex-national team stars.

Khoza, who is plying his trade with Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) Pool Team, is yet to win against Matsebula. He has been beaten twice already for the same amount and further lost in other lesser pot battles.

The latest E20 000 pot battle is also billed for Tshaneni Pool Room on Friday at 2pm. The match format is race to 21 frames. Matsebula confirmed the latest challenge.

He said it was once again a sponsored challenge by their sponsors Magudlu Construction and Sphana Investments. Interestingly, Khoza and Matsebula.



▲ Pool fans watching a local tournament.

Taekwondo eyeing venture into para



▲Taekwondo artists during a local competition.

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE Eswatini Taekwondo Federation is now looking to introduce para wing in the country.

This follows the successful staging of the grading session held at the Siteki School for the deaf. The session saw over 30 kids with special needs taken to basic skills by the technical panel headed by Bongani Nxumalo and Master Cho.

TF Vice Secretary Mbongeni ‘Ndo’ Sibandze confirmed the latest news.

“We are happy with the proceedings of the grading held at the school for the deaf. We were able to find capable youngsters whom we can use in the national team. We hope to assemble a para-national team in the next three to five years, which will eventually represent the country on the international scene,” he said.

He further invited other athletes with special needs to join the sport.

“We also like to invite and encourage more students, especially from the usually marginalised groups, to join the sport,” he said.

ETF will also send the mixed national team to the finals of the 2025 African series taekwondo union finals next month in the Ivory Coast.

Para Taekwondo is an adapted form of Taekwondo designed for athletes with disabilities, recognized by World Taekwondo and included in the Paralympic Games.

It allows athletes with various disabilities to participate in the sport. It aims to promote inclusivity and provide opportunities for athletes with physical impairments to engage in martial arts, fostering both physical fitness and competitive spirit.

The main governing body for Para Taekwondo is World Taekwondo (WT), which established the Para Taekwondo Committee in 2006 to develop and promote the sport for athletes with disabilities.

The WT became a full member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) in 2013, further solidifying its commitment to inclusivity in sports.

Para Taekwondo began gaining traction in the early 2000s, with the first World Para Taekwondo Championships held in 2009 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Initially, the focus was on developing sparring (kyorugi) for athletes with limb deficiencies and arm amputations.



▲The Women national netball team.

Perfect start for Women netball national team

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE netball women national team made a perfect start in the integrated national netball league.

The female national side got the better of Phoenix by 74-17 during the upgraded national league sponsored by the Swaziland Building Society E150 000 league played at Olymp Africa Centre.

The national side is in preparation for the 2025 African netball cup scheduled for December in Malawi.

The Women Under 20 team is yet to feature in the integrated league as part of their preparations for the 2026 Region v youth games.

Senior female team players will compete for their respective clubs on a weekly basis before playing for the national team later in the day under the new format.

Other matches saw Green Lighting ladies outsmart Buffaloes ladies 56-35 during the security forces category.

Defending champions Royal Flames outsmarted Manzini Ladies 91-18.

Eswatini National Netball Association (ENNA) Secretary Nkabindze Shabalala confirmed the results when contacted.

“We are happy with the kick off with the



▲Eswatini National Netball Association Secretary Nkabindze Shabalala.

upgraded national league and believe the concept will improve the sport. This will further spearhead preparations for the women’s national team and Women Under 20 team,” he said.

The full results Females

- 1. Green Lightning 56 - 35 Buffaloes.
- 2. Manzini Ladies 49 - 43 Vixens.
- 3. Royal Flames 91- 18 Manzini Ladies.
- 4. Olymp Africa 26 - 39 ABC Academy.

Males

- 1. Royal Flames 117 - 2 Inferno.
- 2. Vixens 61 - 38 Ballbusters.
- 3. Buffaloes 85 - 14 Phoenix.
- 4. Vixens 75 - 0 Inferno.
- 5. Women’s National Team 74 - 17 Phoenix.

Mamba snatches October Previc golf mug

By Sibusiso Masilela
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MZWANDILE Mamba reigned supreme in the October Previc investment golf competition.

Mamba scored 42 points to win the Lubombo monthly mug held over the weekend, beating a field of over 40 golfers.

He was followed by Jethro Masuku with 41 points, while Fikile Mdluli rounded off the podium finish with 39 points.

The novelty section saw Ivan Sutherland win the longest drive while Mzwandile Mamba and Jethro Masuku won nearest to the pin 2/11 and 5/14 respectively.

The sponsor’s director, Mangaliso Ma-

silela, congratulated the champion for his achievement.

“Kudos to the champion for his excellent performance on the golf course, and we thank golf for attending the competition in numbers. We look forward to a bigger and better competition next month,” he said.

The full results

- 1. Mzwandile Mamba - 45points.
- 2. Jethro Masuku - 41points.
- 3. Fikile Mdluli - 39points.
- 4. Sabelo Simelane - 38points.
- 5. Lenny Mkhonta - 37o/points.

Novelties

- Nearest 2/11 - Jethro Masuku.
- Nearest 5/14 - Mzwandile Mamba.
- Longest drive - Ivan Sutherland.



▲October Previc Investment golf tournament champion Mzwandile Mamba receiving his prize from the sponsor’s representative Mangaliso Masilela at Mananga Country Club.

Edwin blow for Leopard

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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A major blow for Royal Leopard. The local CAF Confederation cup envoys will be without the services of head coach Edwin Matsebula in their next continental assignment. Matsebula will miss the crucial return leg against Maniema Union on Saturday at the Somhlolo National Stadium. The former National Under 17 mentor is serving a one-match suspension following his red card during the first leg match played on October 18, 2025, in Kinshasa. Matsebula affirmed the news when contacted. “I won’t sit on the bench during the return leg due to suspension. I have faith in my technical bench that they will do the job diligently in my absence,” he said. The Ingwenyama Cup champions need a goalless draw to advance to the group stages following the 1-all draw during the first leg encounter. The police side stands to pocket over E7 million they reach the group stages of the continent’s second premier club competition. ‘Ingwemabalabala’ last achieved the same feat during the 2022 edition. Leopard knocked out Namibian side Young African in the preliminary round. Maniema will arrive in the country on Thursday (October 23, 2025) through the King Mswati III international airport.

... Royal Leopard head coach Edwin Matsebula will not be on the bench in the crucial second leg tie against DR Congo’s Maniema Union on Saturday at Somhlolo National Stadium after being sent off in the first leg encounter



▲ Royal Leopard players warm up before the first match against Maniema Union and (left) Suspended coach Edwin Matsebula.



Three-year Primo deal for Leopard

SIGNED, sealed, and delivered. CAF Confederation Cup Royal Leopard envoys have clinched a three-year deal with Primo. The sponsorship includes three sets of kits, tracksuits, bibs and replica kits for supporters as exclusively revealed by sister publication Eswatini Financial Times two months ago. ‘Ingwemabalabala’ has become the fifth local side to partner with

the Italian sportswear company after Nsingizini Hotspurs, Mbabane Swallows, Young Buffaloes and Ubombo Sugar. The reigning Ingwenyama champions, Chief Executive Officer Frank Hurube, confirmed the latest news. “We have concluded a three-year deal with Primo and will be receiving the first batch of the replica jersey on Thursday,” he said. The seasoned football administra-

tor further announced that the entrance fee for the return leg is E40. “We appeal for support from the nation during this crucial assignment, and tickets will be sold at the Moja Business website,” he said. Primo director Bobby Deutschmann could not be reached for comment on the matter. Deutschmann previously confirmed talks with the police side.

Ikarbort linked with Celtics

ZIMBABWEAN mentor Ikarbort Masocha could make a sensational return to Eswatini football. The former Manzini Wanderers and Moneni Pirates mentor is linked with a move to MTN Premier League rookies Tambankulu Celtics. Celtics recently lost the services of local coach Percy Shongwe to Red Rhinos. A source close to the matter revealed that talks between the sugar belt side and Masocha are proceeding smoothly. “Celtics officials are engaging Masocha over his services, and the talks could be concluded before the end of the week,” the source said. Celtics Governor Sebenele

Hlatswako could not be reached for comment when compiling this report. Celtics gained promotion through the promotion playoff, which featured Madlenya FC, Lozitha Spurs and Sidwashini United. They further featured in the GBV pre-season cup, which was held in Emalahleni. The Lubombo based side opened the new MTN Premier League campaign with a 3-0 win over Sisonkhe before the recent 2-1 loss to capital city giants Mbabane Swallows. The green and white ensemble will take on defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs on November 12, 2025, at Tambankulu Stadium in their next league outing.



▲ Zimbabwean mentor Ikarbort Masocha.



**Gordon
grateful for
Mourinho
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Edwin blow for Royal Leopard



● **Royal Leopard head coach Edwin Matsebula will not be on the bench in the crucial second leg tie against DR Congo's Maniema Union on Saturday at Somhlolo National Stadium after being sent off in the first leg encounter. *Page 23***