



► His Majesty King Mswati III receiving Letters of Credence from His Excellency Salem Rashed Al-Shebli, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Eswatini and (Right) His Excellency Tararov Vladimir Nikolaevich, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Eswatini, at Lozitha Royal Palace. (Story on Page 2)

‘HIV is still real menace’ – warns PM

... Premier calls for renewed commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS

► Prime Minister Russell Dlamini with health practitioners during the candle lighting ceremony at the World AIDS Day launch at Royal Swazi Spa.



By Siphesihle Dlamini

ESWATINI might have been the first African country to achieve the global HIV 95-95-95 milestone but the Prime Minister Russell Dlamini, at the launch of the World AIDS Day 2025 campaign in Eswatini, has called for a collective reality check and renewed commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Speaking to a gathering of government officials, health experts, community leaders, and international partners at the World AIDS Day launch at Royal Swazi Spa, he underscored the continuing challenges the country faces despite significant progress.

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King assures Kuwait, Russian diplomats of desire to deepen cooperation, exploring opportunities

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
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HIS Majesty King Mswati III has assured diplomats from the State of Kuwait and Russia of Eswatini’s earnest desire to deepen cooperation and explore new opportunities for mutual benefit. The King made these remarks when receiving Letters of Credence from two newly accredited Ambassadors, His Excellency Salem Rashed Al-Shebli, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Kingdom of Eswatini, and His Excellency Tararov Vladimir Nikolaevich, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Eswatini.

The ceremony took place at Lozitha Royal Palace, marking another chapter in Eswatini’s continued efforts to strengthen diplomatic and developmental partnerships across the globe. His Majesty King Mswati III extended a warm and gracious welcome to both ambassadors, expressing his confidence in the positive contributions they will make toward strengthening ties between Eswatini and their respec-

tive nations.

He wished them success and fulfilment as they begin their diplomatic missions in the country.

Ambassador Salem Rashed Al-Shebli of Kuwait conveyed his gratitude to His Majesty for the gracious welcome and reaffirmed his government’s commitment to advancing cooperation with Eswatini. “I look forward to engaging with the Government and People of Eswatini to explore new avenues for collaboration,” he said. “Our goal is to build upon the strong foundation of trust and goodwill that exists between our countries to achieve meaningful progress and shared prosperity.”

Ambassador Tararov Vladimir Nikolaevich of the Russian Federation also presented his credentials, marking yet another milestone in the deep-rooted relations between the two countries. “The friendly relations between Russia and Eswatini, based on mutual trust and respect, and which celebrated a 25th anniversary last year, have gained significant momentum over the past decade,” the Ambassador stated.



▲ His Majesty receiving Letters of Credence from His Excellency Tararov Vladimir Nikolaevich, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Eswatini.



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini with health practitioners during the Candle lighting Ceremony.



▲ The PM making his remarks.

‘HIV is still real menace’ – PM

ESWATINI might have been the first African country to achieve the global HIV 95-95-95 milestone but the Prime Minister Russell Dlamini, at the launch of the World AIDS Day 2025 campaign in Eswatini, has called for a collective reality check and renewed commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Speaking to a gathering of government officials, health experts, community leaders, and international partners at the World AIDS Day launch at Royal Swazi Spa, he underscored the continuing challenges the country faces despite significant progress.

“Today I want us to have a reality check,” Prime Minister Dlamini began, emphasising the sobering statistics that remain a stark reminder of the epidemic’s grip on the nation. “We must confront the sobering reality that more than 4,000 new HIV infections still occur each year in our country.” He highlighted a troubling rise in AIDS-related deaths, attributing this to issues such as poor treatment adherence, late presentation to care, and the growing burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) among people living with HIV. Condi-

... calls for renewed commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS

tions like hypertension, diabetes, cancers, cardiovascular disease, and mental health problems are increasingly undermining the health and longevity of those affected.

This, he explained, is the “disruption” referenced in this year’s campaign theme, “Overcoming Disruptions, Transforming the AIDS Response.” The Prime Minister described this disruption as one that affects progress, health systems, and hope itself. Yet, he stressed that the government and people of Eswatini are committed not to retreat but to transform their approach to the epidemic.

Dlamini urged a return to fundamental prevention values, particularly abstinence among young people, saying, “This is a reminder that HIV is still a real menace. It is time we re-instil the values of abstinence in our young people. If you cannot abstain, then protect yourself and those you claim to love.” He called for innovative service delivery models that integrate HIV care with other health priorities such as NCDs, mental health, and reproductive health. The Prime Minister also emphasised the need to tackle the social and economic factors that in-

crease vulnerability to HIV, including poverty, inequality, gender-based violence, and stigma.

Highlighting the need for sustainability, Dlamini spoke about the challenges posed by global funding cuts. “Transforming the AIDS response requires that we build a response that is sustainable, inclusive, and resilient,” he said. He called for a bold shift toward national ownership and domestic resource mobilisation, ensuring that communities, especially young people, women, men, and key populations, are central to this transformation, not just as beneficiaries but as active agents of change.

The Prime Minister reminded the audience that Eswatini remains a global leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS. “Eswatini continues to be recognised globally for its exceptional achievements in progress towards the elimination of HIV,” he said proudly. The country has surpassed the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets and was recently recognised as one of the most improved countries in essential health services since 2011. This success, he noted, is the result of strong political leadership, community commitment, and the tireless work of health

professionals, partners, and civil society.

The launch event featured an interactive panel discussion aimed at reflecting on the current state of the HIV response and realigning strategies to overcome ongoing disruptions. Dlamini expressed optimism that the insights gathered would help shape the nation’s journey toward World AIDS Day on December 1st and beyond. In a direct appeal to partners, the Prime Minister said, “To our partners, local and international, we value your continued collaboration and call upon you to remain steadfast in your support.” He also acknowledged the vital role of communities, stating, “Your voices, your stories, and your resilience continue to drive the HIV response in the country.” He called on the private sector, faith leaders, and youth networks to step up their leadership in this critical phase.

Concluding his address, Prime Minister Dlamini issued a rallying call for unity and hope: “As we embark on this campaign, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to a future where no child is born with HIV, where no life is lost to AIDS, and where every person living with HIV can live long and healthy lives free from stigma, discrimination, and inequality.”

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Eswatini launches National Foster Care Placement Committee

THE government of Eswatini has marked a significant milestone in child protection with the official commissioning of the National Foster Care Placement Committee.

This development underscores the country's dedication to ensuring that every child grows up in a safe, nurturing, and loving environment. In her address, Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla. The DPM acknowledged the increasing number of children orphaned or abandoned due to poverty, abuse, and family breakdown. She emphasised the urgent need for structured support systems, stating, "These children deserve more than shelter, they deserve dignity, stability, and opportunity to thrive."

Dladla also paid tribute to Residential Care Facilities, recognising their longstanding role as critical lifelines for children without parental care. However, she urged all liSwati who are currently providing informal foster care to register at their nearest Social Welfare Office. This registration effort aims to create a comprehensive database of foster care providers, enabling a better understanding and more effective program design to meet the real needs of children and families.

The National Foster Care Placement Committee has been established to oversee and strengthen the foster care system in Eswatini. Its responsibilities include reviewing and approving foster care applications, recommending placement terms such as the child's age, duration of placement, and number of children per family, managing terminations and transitions, and advocating for resources



▲ The Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla posing with the new National Foster Care Placement Committee.

and policy support to enhance foster care services nationwide.

Since the program's inception, 135 children have been placed in foster care, and three children have been successfully reintegrated with their birth families. Currently, 167 foster care families are registered across Eswatini, and 320 foster care parents have been trained and certified, demonstrating growing community involvement and capacity in childcare.

The committee's membership reflects a broad, multisectoral approach, including

representatives from government ministries, civil society, and child welfare organisations. Key members include Makhosi Simelane, DPMO Under Secretary and Chairperson; Bhekani Dlamini from CANGO; Ayanda Simelane from the Ministry of Education and Training; Bagunini Nxumalo from DPMO; Zwakele Dlamini from REPS; Mncedisi Dlamini, Director of Public Prosecution; Cebile Khumalo from the Prime Minister's Office focusing on Human Trafficking; Nokuthula Phungwayo from the Ministry of Tinkhundla and Development;

Wandile Simelane from Bulembu Ministries; Bonisile Bhembe from SOS; and a yet-to-be-appointed representative from the Attorney General's Office.

In addition to the main committee, an Appeals Committee has been formed to address disputes and appeals related to foster care decisions. This committee is chaired by Mcusi Shongwe, Director of Social Welfare at DPMO, and includes Andile Nhleko, National Director of SOS, and Nomcebo Nkomo Nhlengetfwa, Director for the National Children's Services Department.

... DPM hands over new houses to vulnerable elderly in Pigg's Peak

DEPUTY Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, has officially handed over four newly constructed houses to vulnerable elderly residents of Pigg's Peak Inkhundla, fulfilling a heartfelt vision of His Majesty King Mswati III to ensure that senior citizens live in safe, dignified, and comfortable homes.

This milestone reflects the government's commitment to improving the quality of life for the nation's elderly population, many of whom have faced severe housing challenges. One of the beneficiaries, 74-year-old Juana Nkonde Dlamini from Luhlangotsini, shared her story of hardship. Juana lives with her daughter and eight grandchildren in a cramped one-room shelter after their previous home collapsed. The family's living

conditions were so restricted that at night they had to remove household items just to create enough space to sleep. The new house now provides much-needed relief and comfort for the entire family, offering them a secure and spacious environment to rebuild their lives.

Dilapidated

Similarly, at Nginamadolo, 75-year-old Khelina Lukhele experienced a traumatic ordeal when her stick-and-mud house collapsed in 2023 while she was inside with her newborn grandchild. By a stroke of luck, both survived the collapse. Since then, she had been living in an old, dilapidated structure that lacked windows and doors and had a leaking roof, exposing her and her family to the elements. The new home marks a significant improvement, providing safety

and dignity that she had been deprived of for so long.

Another poignant story comes from Khokhiwe Masango, 75, of Nsangwini, who lost her home to a devastating fire three years ago while she was away. "I cried for over a month after losing my house," she recounted emotionally. "The fire started when I was not home, and I lost everything. Thank you, Deputy Prime Minister and your team, for building this beautiful house."

Assist

Austin Mlipha, 64, also from Nsangwini, had been living in a tent provided by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) after his stick-and-mud house collapsed.

Today, he received a safe and permanent home, ending a long period of uncertainty and

discomfort. In addition to the government's support, Member of Parliament Jabulani Mabuza donated money to assist Mpipha, while the Deputy Prime Minister's office provided food parcels to all four families. Montigny Company generously contributed beds and wardrobes, ensuring that the new homes are not only safe but also furnished with essential comforts.

Deputy Prime Minister Dladla emphasised that these efforts are part of His Majesty King Mswati III's dream to guarantee that elderly citizens live in secure and comfortable structures. She highlighted the importance of respecting and caring for senior citizens, urging young people to cease the practice of chasing elders from their homes. "Our elders deserve respect, care, and a safe place to live," she stated.



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla handing over a house as Member of Parliament Jabulani Mabuza looks on.



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla and Member of Parliament Jabulani Mabuza interacting with an elder.
▲ One of the handed over houses.

FOCUS ON ARMY RECRUITMENT RACE

Winner thanks God for success

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

IT was a day of triumph, talent, and thanksgiving as 18-year-old Siyanda Ndwandwe outpaced dozens of hopefuls to clinch first place in the male category of the Matsanjeni North army recruitment race.

Ndwandwe, who hails from a humble background, crossed the finish line with determination etched across his face a moment that marked not only personal victory but also family pride.

His cousin, Nomzamo Dlamini, had earlier won the female category, turning the event into what many spectators dubbed “a family affair of champions.”

Speaking shortly after the race, Siyanda could not contain his joy and gratitude.

“I thank God for giving me the strength and endurance to finish strong. The race was tough, but through His grace, I made it,” he said with a wide smile, still catching his breath from the grueling run.

The young athlete also extended his appreciation to his supporters.

“I am grateful to everyone who cheered for me their voices kept me going when I felt tired. This win is for them and my family,” he added.

Siyanda, who is no stranger to competitive running, has participated in various local races and continues to make a name for himself among Eswatini’s rising athletic talents. His consistent performance and discipline have earned him respect among his peers and admiration from the community.

Brigadier General Sotja Dlamini, who is overseeing the recruitment process in the Lubombo region, commended the spirit and resilience displayed by participants at Matsanjeni North.



▲ Winner Siyanda Ndwandwe 18, who thanked God after winning army recruitment race at Matsanjeni North.

“These races are not just about speed they test determination, fitness, and readiness for service. We are proud of the energy shown by young Emaswati like Siyanda and Nomzamo,” he said.

The army recruitment races have continued to attract hundreds of youth across the country, each hoping to secure a spot in the armed forces. Beyond the competition, the races have become a celebration of community unity, fitness, and national pride.

As the recruitment campaign moves to the next inkhundla, all eyes will be on the Ndwandwe-Dlamini cousins’ proof that in Matsanjeni North, speed truly runs in the family.



Lugongolweni hosts massive recruitment race

THE spirit of patriotism and determination filled the air at Lugongolweni Inkhundla on Thursday morning as an estimated 500 young army hopefuls turned up to take part in the army recruitment race, part of the ongoing national recruitment exercise by the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF). From as early as 5 a.m., the dusty roads of Lugongolweni were lined with energetic youths both male and female eagerly awaiting their chance to prove their physical readiness for the highly competitive selection process.

The recruitment race is one of the first and most critical stages in the army enlistment process, assessing endurance, speed, and overall fitness. The turnout at Lugongolweni marked one of the largest gatherings seen in the Lubombo region so far, a clear sign of growing interest among young Emaswati to serve their country.

Speaking during the event, Brigadier General Sotja Dlamini praised the enthusiasm displayed by participants, noting that the Defence Force continues to seek disciplined, committed, and physically capable recruits.

“We are very impressed with the turnout and the level of determination shown today. This shows that our young people are ready to serve their King and country. However, we continue to remind them that discipline, honesty, and patriotism are equally important qualities in the military,” Dlamini said.

He also urged local leaders, particularly Bandlancane and constituency councils, to continue verifying participants’ details to ensure that only rightful candidates take part in the recruitment races.

The race proceeded smoothly under the supervision of both UEDF officers and local authorities, with medical personnel on standby to attend to any emergencies. Several participants expressed their excitement and relief after completing the demanding course, many describing it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to achieve their dream of joining the Defence Force.

Among them was 21-year-old Sabelo Dlamini from Mapulane, who said he had been training for months in anticipation of this day.

“I have always dreamed of wearing the army uniform. Today was tough, but I gave it everything because this means a lot to me and my family,” he said, catching his breath after crossing the finish line.

The army recruitment drive continues across various constituencies in the Lubombo region, with the Defence Force expected to conclude the regional races in the coming days before moving to other parts of the country.

As the sun set over Lugongolweni, it was clear that the race had tested not just speed, but also the courage and endurance of Eswatini’s youth the very qualities that define the nation’s future defenders.

Mom inspired me to win army recruitment –Winner

EMOTIONS ran high at the Matsanjeni North Inkhundla on Thursday morning when 18-year-old Nomzamo Dlamini stormed across the finish line to claim first position in the female category of the ongoing army recruitment race.

The young athlete, hailing from a humble background, was momentarily lost for words as she caught her breath after the intense competition. For Nomzamo, the victory meant more than just a race it was a heartfelt tribute to her mother, who has been her pillar of strength since she lost her father at only 18 months old.

“I run for my mother,” Nomzamo said with tears of joy in her eyes. “She’s my greatest motivation and the reason I never give up. Every step I take, I take for her.”

Nomzamo’s story is one



▲ Nomzamo Dlamini said she was inspired by her mom.

of resilience, discipline, and family pride. A seasoned runner, she has already represented notable athletic teams such as RESCORP, REPS, and TZD, showcasing her growing reputation in the local athletics scene.

Adding a remarkable twist to the day’s results, Nomzamo is also cousin to the male category winner, proving that exceptional speed truly runs in the Dlamini family. Their joint triumph drew cheers and admiration

from spectators and army officials alike, who praised their performance and sportsmanship.

Brigadier General Sotja Dlamini, who oversaw the event, congratulated the young athletes for their determination and physical readiness, noting that the army recruitment exercises continue to reveal exceptional young talent across the country.

“These races are not just about physical fitness they show discipline, focus, and spirit,” he said. “Nomzamo and others like her represent the future we want to see in our armed forces.”

The army recruitment drive, which has already drawn hundreds of hopefuls across Eswatini, is designed to identify potential recruits through endurance races held at various constituencies.

‘Two weeks of training paid off’

DETERMINATION, discipline, and faith were the winning formula for Khulekani Shongwe, who emerged victorious in the Lugongolweni Inkhundla army recruitment race held on Thursday morning.

The 24-year-old, currently unemployed, outpaced hundreds of other hopefuls who turned up for the challenging fitness test a key part of the ongoing army recruitment exercise being conducted across the country.

Beaming with pride and relief after crossing the finish line first, Shongwe revealed that he had only trained for two weeks in preparation for the race. “I didn’t have much time, but I told myself that I must give it my all,” he said, still catching his breath. “I thank God for giving me the strength to

complete the race and come out first. This means a lot to me and my family.”

According to event officials, close to 500 young men and women participated in the race, which tested endurance, speed, and mental toughness qualities the army looks for in potential recruits.

Spectators from surrounding communities lined the course to cheer on the participants, creating an electrifying atmosphere as competitors pushed themselves to their limits.

Brigadier General Sotja Dlamini, who oversees the recruitment process, commended the participants for their enthusiasm and urged them to maintain discipline and fitness throughout the selection stages. He also reminded community leaders to ensure that those participating are genuine residents



▲ Khulekani Shongwe celebrates after winning the Lugongolweni Inkhundla army recruitment race on Thursday.

of their constituencies to uphold fairness and transparency in the recruitment process.

For Shongwe, the win is more than just a personal triumph it’s a step toward a lifelong dream. “Joining the army has always been my goal,” he said. “I know it’s not going to be easy, but I’m ready to serve my country with pride.”

Eswatini elected Chair of UN Economic Committee for Southern Africa

By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has been elected Chair of the Bureau of the Thirty-First Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (IC-SOE) for Southern Africa, with Malawi chosen as Vice-Chair and Lesotho serving as Rapporteur.

The announcement was made at the opening of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) regional meeting, held in Ezulwini.

The committee brings together senior government officials, economists, and policy experts from Southern African countries to shape the region's economic development agenda.

Eswatini's election marks a key milestone in its growing role in regional policy coordination and economic integration efforts.

The IC-SOE is responsible for guiding UNECA's sub regional work programme, aligning it with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Speaking after the election, the Director for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Mluleki Dlamini, expressed appreciation for the confidence shown by fellow member states.

"We accept this responsibility with humility and gratitude. Eswatini looks forward



▲ Business Eswatini CEO E Nathi Dlamini seated with MSMEs Director Mluleki Dlamini during the meeting.

to working closely with Malawi, Lesotho, and all member states to strengthen regional cooperation and advance the economic transformation agenda for Southern Africa," Dlamini said.

The new Bureau will oversee the Committee's deliberations under the theme 'Unlocking AfCFTA's Potential: Building Value Chains and Overcoming Barriers to Trade in Southern Africa'

The session is focused on translating the

AfCFTA framework into practical actions that enhance intra-African trade and industrial development.

As Chair, Eswatini will coordinate policy discussions on trade facilitation, regional value chain development, and financing industrial transformation.

The country is also expected to lead follow-up engagements between UNECA, SADC member states, and development partners on implementing key recommen-

dations from the session.

Worth mentioning is that, Eswatini's leadership comes at a time when the region is seeking to deepen economic integration, improve trade logistics, and reduce non-tariff barriers.

The Committee's outcomes will directly influence national and regional strategies for harnessing AfCFTA opportunities.

A Delegate member from Botswana Ephraim Sizanyir said Eswatini's chairmanship aligns with its broader commitment to regional cooperation.

The country is also currently serving as Chair of the African Union's Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration, under which it is championing initiatives to leverage government procurement for industrialization.

Dlamini said Eswatini's focus during its tenure as IC-SOE Chair would include advancing the participation of small and medium enterprises in regional value chains, supporting industrial linkages, and promoting inclusive trade.

"MSMEs are central to building Africa's productive capacity. We want to ensure that smaller enterprises are part of the AfCFTA-driven value chain growth," he said.

The meeting brought together representatives from 11 Southern African countries, development partners, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. It will conclude with the adoption of key resolutions to guide economic policy coordination across the sub region.

Win is for my mom – Hloniphile Bhembe

By Thokozani Mazibuko

DETERMINATION, discipline, and a mother's encouragement have propelled 22-year-old Hloniphile Bhembe to victory in the women's category of the Lugongolweni Inkhundla army recruitment race, held on Thursday morning.

Bhembe, who hails from the Lubombo region, crossed the finish line ahead of hundreds of female competitors, her face lighting up with pride as she waved to the cheering crowd. Her triumph was not just about speed, but a touching tribute to the woman who stood by her every step of the way her mother.

"This win is for my mom," said an emotional Bhembe after the race. "She's been my biggest supporter from day one. Every morning when I woke up to train, she would be there, sometimes even jogging beside me. Her belief in me kept me going, especially on days I wanted to give up."

The race formed part of the ongoing national army recruitment exercise, which has drawn large turnouts across the country. At Lugongolweni, close to 500 hopefuls both men and women took part, each vying for a chance to prove their physical fitness and endurance before the recruitment panel.

Bhembe, a recent school leaver and currently unemployed, says she has been preparing for this opportunity since the announcement of the recruitment drive. Her goal, she says, is not only to serve her country but also to make her family proud.



▲ Hloniphile Bhembe has attributed her victory at Lugongolweni Inkhundla army recruitment race.

"I told myself that if I can win today, it will show my mom that all her sacrifices were worth it. She always says hard work pays off and today, it truly did," she shared, smiling through tears of joy.

Her victory earned her thunderous applause from spectators and fellow participants alike, with many praising her humility and drive. Race officials commended all participants for their discipline and spirit of sportsmanship, emphasizing that such determination embodies the values the army seeks.

As the army recruitment campaign continues across other constituencies in the Lubombo region, Bhembe's story stands as an inspiration to many young women a reminder that success is often born out of love, perseverance, and the unwavering support of family.

"Behind every strong daughter," one onlooker remarked, "is a mother who believed she could and now, we've all seen the result."

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▲ His Royal Highness Prince Lonkhokhela, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy with President of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and India's Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi.

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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AIMED at advancing its renewable energy agenda, the Kingdom of Eswatini is engaging closely with the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to accelerate the development and deployment of solar power within the country.

This initiative was highlighted during the ongoing ISA Assembly held in New Delhi, India, where His Royal Highness Prince Lonkhokhela, Minister for Natural Resources and Energy for Eswatini, held a pivotal bilateral meeting with Pralhad Joshi, President of the International Solar Alliance and India's Minister of New and Renewable Energy.

The discussions centred on exploring avenues for cooperation and technical support that the ISA can extend to Eswatini's

Eswatini, ISA forge path for enhanced solar energy cooperation

solar energy sector. Minister Prince Lonkhokhela reaffirmed Eswatini's strong commitment to harnessing its abundant solar resources as a cornerstone of the nation's energy reform and growth strategy.

Solar power

He emphasised the critical need for collaborative efforts to mobilise investments aimed at upgrading and modernising the country's transmission and distribution infrastructure. Such improvements are essential to accommodate a larger share of intermittent solar power, thereby ensuring a more resilient, reliable, and sustainable electricity supply system.

The Minister articulated a clear vision for Eswatini's energy future, one that aligns



▲ Dignitaries in a conversation centered on exploring avenues for cooperation and technical support that the International Solar Alliance (ISA) can extend to Eswatini's solar energy sector.

with global trends toward clean energy and reflects the Kingdom's dedication to sustainable development. He underscored the importance of support from both the ISA and the Republic of India in facilitating this transition, particularly through investment facilitation and knowledge exchange.

Response

In response, ISA President Pralhad Joshi expressed strong support for Eswatini's solar ambitions, pledging to assist the country in scaling up its solar energy deployment. He highlighted the global decline in solar photovoltaic (PV) technology costs, which has made solar energy increasingly affordable and accessible. Joshi assured that the ISA would work closely with Eswatini to

ensure that solar tariffs remain competitive, thereby promoting wider adoption and energy equity.

Furthering this collaborative spirit, His Royal Highness Prince Lonkhokhela is scheduled to meet with ISA Director-General H.E. Ashish Khanna to deepen discussions on tailored support mechanisms for Eswatini's solar energy projects. These engagements are expected to explore technical assistance, capacity building, and financing options that can accelerate the Kingdom's renewable energy transition. Supporting the delegation, Thabile Nkhosi, Director of Energy at Eswatini's Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, also participated in the discussions.

Man gunned down in cold blood at Hluti

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE quiet community of Tidulini under Hluti was left in shock on Wednesday morning after a 42-year-old man was brutally gunned down in what police have described as a "cold-blooded murder."

According to a statement issued by the Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, the tragic incident occurred on Tuesday, 29 October 2025, at around 6:15 a.m.

Preliminary reports indicate that the victim, whose name is being withheld pending the notification of his next of kin, was shot several times in the upper body by an unknown assailant while at Tidulini. He was declared dead at the scene.

"Police at Hluti are investigating a murder case whereby a 42-year-old man of Tidulini was shot several times with a firearm and died instantly," Mnguni confirmed. "We urge members of the public who may have information that could assist in the investigation to contact the nearest police station." Residents of Tidulini expressed deep concern over the rising cases of violent crimes in the area, calling

for increased police patrols and community vigilance. One resident, who asked not to be named, said the sound of gunshots early in the morning sent people fleeing indoors in fear. "It's very scary because we never know who might be next. The community used to be peaceful, but these killings are becoming too common," the resident lamented.

The motive behind the shooting remains unclear, and no arrests had been made at the time of going to press. Police have since intensified investigations and assured the public that they are doing everything possible to bring the perpetrator(s) to justice. The deceased's body has been taken to the Hlathikhulu Government Hospital



▲ Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni.

mortuary for a post-mortem examination as investigations continue.

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BRIEFS

Trump shaves China tariffs

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday he had agreed with President Xi Jinping to trim tariffs on China in exchange for Beijing cracking down on the illicit fentanyl trade, resuming U.S. soybean purchases and keeping rare earths exports flowing.

Trump's face-to-face talks with Xi in the South Korean city of Busan, their first since 2019, marked the finale of a whirlwind Asia trip on which he also touted trade breakthroughs with South Korea, Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

Oil falls as investors assess trade truce

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LNG project cost still \$20 billion

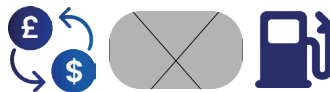
FRENCH oil major TotalEnergies will be able to restart its Mozambique LNG project quickly, with a budget at \$20.5 billion, CEO Patrick Pouyanne told investors on Thursday.

Pouyanne said media were incorrectly interpreting his letter to Mozambique's president, which requests approval for a cost increase of \$4.5 billion related to the project's four-year freeze under force majeure. (Reuters)



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.8536	17.3187
G.B. Pound	22.1877	22.8580
EURO	19.5936	20.2012
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	



Eswatini pushes 'Right of Supply' to drive Africa's industrialization

Stories By Delisa Magagula

Eswatini has proposed a new continental trade framework that seeks to transform government procurement into a key driver of Africa's industrialization under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Speaking at the 31st Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa, Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg said Eswatini is advancing the idea of a 'Right of Supply' mechanism that will allow African countries to commit to sourcing specific products from within the continent.

"Across Africa, Governments collectively spend close to 17% of GDP on procurement, amounting to nearly one trillion US dollars annually. Yet this immense buying power remains largely untapped as a driver of industrialisation," Rijkenberg said.

The initiative, led under Eswatini's chairmanship of the African Union's Specialized Techni-

cal Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration, aims to give African producers guaranteed markets for locally made goods.

Under the proposed system, each country would identify key products it can competitively produce and supply to other African governments, creating predictable demand and stimulating investment in regional value chains.

"This approach would provide the demand certainty needed for private investment and regional supply chains to flourish," he said.

Rijkenberg said His Majesty King Mswati III's vision for Africa's industrialization centres on shifting the continent's trade from raw materials to finished products, thereby retaining more value within African economies.

"By leveraging procurement, we can stimulate local industries and accelerate the shift from trade in raw materials to trade in finished products," the Minister added.

The initiative is expected to promote regional specialization, support industrial diversification, and reduce Africa's dependence on imported manufactured goods.

Rijkenberg emphasized that the Right of Sup-



▲ Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg said the government's decision to issue the bond was part of a broader strategy to finance development sustainably.

ply mechanism could also help governments retain resources within Africa, creating fiscal space to fund health, education, and social protection sectors.

He called on member states to collaborate closely to operationalize the idea through coordinated policy frameworks and shared implementation mechanisms within the AfCFTA.



▲ Business Eswatini CEO E Nathi Dlamini seated with MSMEs Director Mluleki Dlamini.



▲ Various member states who attended the event.

Southern Africa to move beyond raw exports

The Minister for Finance, Neal Rijkenberg, has called on Southern African countries to accelerate industrialization and reduce their dependence on exporting raw commodities by building strong, interconnected regional value chains.

Speaking at the opening of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Thirty-First Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa, Rijkenberg said the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents one of the continent's most transformative economic opportunities.

"The AfCFTA represents a single market of 1.4 billion people with a combined GDP of over 3.4 trillion US dollars. Realizing this potential requires that we move beyond dependence on raw commodity exports and instead build strong, interconnected regional value chains," Rijkenberg said.

He noted that more than 70 per cent of exports from the region remain unprocessed commodities, with Southern Africa processing less than 5 per cent of its copper locally despite holding nearly 6 per cent of Africa's total copper output.

"These figures remind us that the promise of the AfCFTA can only be fulfilled when we convert our advantage in resources into a competitive advantage in production," he added.

Rijkenberg highlighted key sectors with potential for regional value chain development, including battery production linking the Democratic Republic of Congo's cobalt, Zambia's copper, and South Africa's manufacturing capabilities; agro-processing; and the leather industry.

He said these linkages could create decent jobs, enhance competitiveness, and reduce vulnerability to external shocks.

The Minister also urged regional governments to prioritize trade facilitation by removing non-tariff barriers such as customs delays, differing sanitary standards, and inadequate infrastructure.

"Policy harmonization within SADC and alignment with the AfCFTA's rules of origin are critical to seamless trade," he said.

Rijkenberg further called for accelerated digitalization of trade processes and improved access to financing for small and medium enterprises, which face an estimated US\$50 billion financing gap.

"Industrialization cannot advance without financing. The AfCFTA Adjustment Fund and regional development finance institutions must be leveraged to mobilize both public and private investments," he said.

He encouraged governments to invest in technical and vocational training for manufacturing, logistics, and digital trade to ensure that women and youth play a central role in Africa's industrial transformation.

... Eswatini urges Regional scorecard

ESWATINI has proposed the creation of a regional scorecard to measure progress in value chain development under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg made the proposal during the opening of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's Thirty-First Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Southern Africa.

"Let us use this session to move from commitment to coordinated action. I propose that we consider the establishment of a regional scorecard on value chain development, which can help track our collective progress and identify areas for improvement," he said.

Rijkenberg said the scorecard would help ensure accountability and consistency across Southern African countries as they work to build stronger regional trade and industrial linkages.

He said the region faces several structural challenges that hinder its trade competitiveness, including limited infrastructure, high logistics costs, and regulatory inconsistencies.

"Overcoming these barriers requires stronger partnerships between governments, the private sector, development partners, and civil society," he said.

Rijkenberg reaffirmed Eswatini's commitment to aligning national policies with AfCFTA goals, particularly in areas of trade facilitation, digital transformation, and industrial policy.

He said Eswatini would continue working with the ECA's Sub regional Office for Southern Africa and SADC member states to ensure inclusive participation and sustainable progress.

By Delisa Magagula

Govt turns to bond market to fund infrastructure push



▲Through the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE), government this week auctioned an eight-year infrastructure bond valued at E200 million with a fixed coupon rate of 11.25 per cent per annum.



▲Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg said the government’s decision to issue the bond was part of a broader strategy to finance development sustainably.

benefits,” said Thwala.

The CBE has described the issuance as part of an on-going effort to deepen the local capital market and broaden investment options for domestic players.

The bank has been gradually introducing instruments with different maturities to create a benchmark yield curve and improve liquidity in the secondary market.

Bond market data show that investor appetite for government securities has

increased steadily over the past two years, with participation led by pension funds and financial institutions seeking stable long-term returns. Analysts say this trend reflects a maturing investment environment and growing confidence in the government’s fiscal management.

Despite this positive momentum, financial experts warn that elevated interest rates may increase the overall cost of public borrowing.

The government’s total domestic debt has risen in recent years as it balances the need for infrastructure spending with fiscal sustainability objectives.

Rijkenberg acknowledged the challenge but maintained that borrowing through the bond market remains a prudent choice compared to external loans.

“Domestic borrowing allows us to maintain control over our financing conditions and avoid exposure to exchange rate fluctuations. We are focused on ensuring that our debt levels remain within sustainable limits and aligned with economic growth prospects,” said the Minister.

He added that the Ministry of Finance continues to coordinate closely with the CBE to ensure debt management practices remain transparent and within approved fiscal frameworks.

Economists say the success of future infrastructure bonds will depend on government credibility, market stability, and the visibility of tangible results from financed projects. The next steps, they argue, should include regular public updates on how funds are used and measurable outcomes from completed infrastructure works.

With the current bond fully subscribed, the CBE is expected to continue exploring similar issuances as part of its domestic market development agenda. Officials have hinted that future bonds may also target specific sectors such as renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and industrial development.

Rijkenberg said the government will continue engaging with market participants to refine its financing instruments and maintain investor confidence.

“We appreciate the trust that investors have placed in this bond. Our commitment is to ensure that the funds raised are used efficiently and transparently to deliver infrastructure that supports sustainable economic growth,” said the Minister.

Trump shaves China tariffs in deal with Xi on fentanyl

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday he had agreed with President Xi Jinping to trim tariffs on China in exchange for Beijing cracking down on the illicit fentanyl trade, resuming U.S. soybean purchases and keeping rare earths exports flowing.

Trump's face-to-face talks with Xi in the South Korean city of Busan, their first since 2019, marked the finale of a whirlwind Asia trip on which he also touted trade breakthroughs with South Korea, Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

"It was an amazing meeting," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One shortly after he left South Korea, ranking the talks a "12 out of 10".

Trump said tariffs on Chinese imports would be cut to 47% from 57%, by halving to 10% the rate of tariffs related to trade in fentanyl precursor drugs.

Xi will work "very hard to stop the flow" of fentanyl, a deadly synthetic opioid that is the leading cause of

American overdose deaths, Trump said.

China agreed to pause export controls unveiled this month on rare earths, elements with vital roles in cars, planes and weapons that have become Beijing's most potent source of leverage in its trade war with the United States.

The pause would last for a year, China's commerce ministry said in a statement.

It added that the two sides had also reached consensus on expanding agricultural trade and would work to resolve issues around short video app TikTok, which Trump seeks to bring under U.S.-controlled ownership.

The reaction to the detente was muted in global stock markets, with major Asian indexes and European futures swinging between gains and losses.

China's Shanghai Composite Index slipped from a 10-year high, while U.S. soybean futures were weaker.

"The response from markets has

been cautious in contrast to Trump's enthusiastic characterisation of the meeting," said Besa Deda, chief economist at advisory firm William Buck in Sydney.

Among major U.S. trading partners, only Brazil and India are still subject to higher tariffs.

In the run-up to the meeting, world stock markets from Wall Street to Tokyo had hit records on hopes of a breakthrough in a trade war between the world's two largest economies that has disrupted supply chains and rocked global business confidence.

Trump repeatedly talked up prospects of reaching agreement with Xi since U.S. negotiators on Sunday said they had agreed a framework with China to avoid 100% U.S. tariffs on its goods and defer China's export curbs on rare earths.

The cordial meeting between the leaders, at a South Korean air base on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, lasted more than 1-1/2 hours.

(Reuters)



▲ Donald Trump's face-to-face talks with President Xi Jinping in the South Korean city of Busan, their first since 2019, marked the finale of a whirlwind Asia trip on which he also touted trade breakthroughs with South Korea, Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

TotalEnergies CEO says Mozambique LNG project cost still \$20 billion

FRENCH oil major TotalEnergies will be able to restart its Mozambique LNG project quickly, with a budget at \$20.5 billion, CEO Patrick Pouyanne told investors on Thursday.

Pouyanne said media were incorrectly interpreting his letter to Mozambique's president, which requests approval for a cost increase of \$4.5 billion related to the project's four-year freeze under force majeure.

"I want to be very clear and strong on this point, the budget was around \$15.5 billion previously, \$4.5 billion is

what we've spent in these past years. So the total is not \$25 billion but \$20.5 billion," Pouyanne said.

Total last week lifted force majeure on the project, but final restart depends on the Mozambican government agreeing on a higher budget.

In 2020, Total signed a \$14.9 billion senior debt financing agreement for the project. At that time, CFO Jean-Pierre Sbraire described the project's cost as \$20 billion, with Total financing the remaining \$5 billion not covered by the loans. (Reuters)



▲ TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanne.



▲ Oil prices eased on Thursday.

... Oil falls as investors assess US-China trade truce

OIL prices eased on Thursday as investors assessed a potential trade truce between the United States and China, as President Donald Trump lowered tariffs on China after a meeting with President Xi Jinping in South Korea.

Brent crude futures fell 42 cents or 0.65% to \$64.50 a barrel by 1136 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures dropped by 38 cents or 0.63% to \$60.10.

Trump agreed to reduce tariffs on China to 47% from 57% in a one-year deal in exchange for Beijing resuming U.S. soybean purchases, keeping rare earths exports flowing and cracking down on the illicit fentanyl trade.

PVM analyst Tamas Varga said investors see the announced agreement between China and the U.S. as more of a de-escalation of tension than a structural change in relationship. He also noted that lower Brent prices appeared to go against robust drawdowns in U.S. oil inventories.

Also helping to boost the economic outlook, the U.S. Federal Reserve lowered interest rates

on Wednesday, in line with market expectations. However, it signalled that might be the last cut of the year as the ongoing government shutdown threatens data availability.

"The Fed's decision underscores a broader turn in its policy cycle - one that favours gradual reflation and support over restraint, providing a tailwind to commodities sensitive to economic activity," Rystad Energy's chief economist Claudio Galimberti said in a note.

The gains by Brent and WTI in the previous session also reflected a larger-than-expected drawdown in U.S. crude and fuel inventories.

Both benchmarks are on track for declines of more than 3% in October, which would be their third consecutive month of losses following concerns about oversupply.

U.S. crude inventories dropped by 6.86 million barrels to 416 million barrels in the week ended October 24, the Energy Information Administration said, compared with analysts' expectations in a Reuters poll for a 211,000-barrel fall.

(Reuters)

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‘Cat Matlala gave Sibiya money for B&B’

ALLEGED drug cartel member Vusimuzi “Cat” Matlala told police he regularly gave suspended deputy national police commissioner Lt-Gen Shadrack Sibiya money in bags of cash. Matlala gave some of this money to Sibiya to purchase a B&B.

This information was revealed by Witness C on Thursday at the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Criminality, Political Interference, and Corruption in the Criminal Justice System taking place at the Brigitte Mabandla Justice College in Pretoria.

The commission is chaired by retired Constitutional Court Justice Mbuyiseli Madlanga.

Thursday’s commission proceedings were held partially in camera because Witness C was testifying remotely and off camera. Witness C’s name has been withheld to protect his identity.

Certified forensic investigator

Witness C said he is a member of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) political

killings task team (PKTT). He is also a certified forensic investigator specialising in fraud and corruption investigations.

He said he joined the PKTT in May 2020. On December 2 2024 he was deployed to assist the Gauteng organised crime unit with its investigations.

His testimony is led by the commission’s evidence leader, Advocate Ofentse Motlhasedi. The latter is assisted by Adv Mahlape Sello SC, another evidence leader of the commission.

During his testimony, Witness C told the commission that after police arrested Matlala in Midrand in May, he started name-dropping. He told them that he knows Sibiya very well.

“Matlala told us how he met general Sibiya. He said he used to provide security services at the farm of the late Mr Msibi [late taxi boss Zanemvula Jothan Msibi]. He said Sibiya was a regular person there at Msibi’s farm, and he met him there. Matlala said at the farm he met Msibi’s associates, and they were introduced to him as the Big

Five.

Links to wealthy taxi boss
“Matlala said Msibi’s farm was located after Hammanskraal at a game reserve. He said it was the most secure farm because only those close to Msibi had access to the farm,” said Witness C.

Msibi, popularly known as Mswazi, was a wealthy Pretoria taxi owner and transport mogul. He died in a Pretoria hospital in January 2024 due to an undisclosed illness.

According to the national head of crime intelligence, Lt-Gen Dumisani Khumalo, the “Big Five” is a cartel that deals in drug trafficking, contract killings, cross-border vehicle hijackings, kidnappings, tender fraud, and extortion mainly related to drug trafficking.

Witness C also said after Msibi’s passing, Matlala told police that Sibiya told him that “since the old man [Msibi] has passed away, you must take care of me, and I will take care of you in return...”

“Matlala’s understanding was that Sibiya wants him to take care of him financially... Matlala said Sibiya preferred cash payments



▲ SAPS Deputy National Commissioner for Crime Detection, Lt-General Shadrack Sibiya.

and not electronic payments...” said Witness C.

He said Matlala told police that Sibiya would instruct him to go to Sibiya’s house and drop off the money. And he would also go to Sibiya’s townhouse in a gated community in Sandton to drop off the money there.

Funded Sibiya son’s wedding party

“Matlala said he once gave Sibiya R1-million in a certain month. And the money was a portion that came from the R360-million SAPS tender he received. He said he gave Sibiya R300, 000 towards a party organised for Sibiya’s son, who was getting married.

“Matlala said Sibiya once instructed him to place cash in a dustbin located next to his SAPS office in Pretoria. He did not specify how much he gave Sibiya... Matlala further said he gave Sibiya R2-million in cash at his Sandton house. This was to help him and his wife to purchase a B&B [Bed & Breakfast]...” said Witness C.

Witness C said Matlala told police that he bought Sibiya 20 impalas for his plot but the impalas died.

He said Matlala did not specify where Sibiya’s plot was located.

In his current case, Matlala (49), his wife Tsakani (36), two alleged hitmen Musa Kekana (35) and Tiego Floyd Mabusela (47), and Nthabiseng Nzama (23), who is the daughter of Mabusela, have been charged with the attempted murder of Tebogo Thobejane.

Attempted murder of ex-lover

The five accused are facing various charges including but not limited to attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, fraud, money laundering and defeating the ends of justice. All in connection with the alleged hit on Thobejane.

Their case returns to Alexandra Magistrate’s Court on November 11.

The three counts of attempted murder the accused are facing are



▲ Vusimuzi “Cat” Matlala. in connection with the injuries sustained by Thobejane. Also for injuries sustained by her friends Anele Malinga and Khumbulani Ncube from the alleged hit.

On the night of October 17 2023, the black BMW vehicle that Thobejane, Malinga and Ncube were travelling in was sprayed with a hail of bullets. This happened at the corner of Bryanston and Wilton Drive in Bryanston, Sandton, Johannesburg. The shooting occurred between 10pm and 10:30pm.

No bail for Matlala

Thobejane was shot in the foot, while Malinga was wounded and shot in the spinal cord. Malinga has been left paralysed.

Tsakani and Nzama are out on R20, 000 and R10, 000 bail, respectively.

Kekana, Mabusela and Matlala remain in police custody. Kekana and Mabusela abandoned their bail applications. Matlala was denied bail by the Johannesburg High Court on Monday.

The Johannesburg High Court decision comes after Matlala appealed the Alexandra Magistrate’s Court decision that denied him bail in September.

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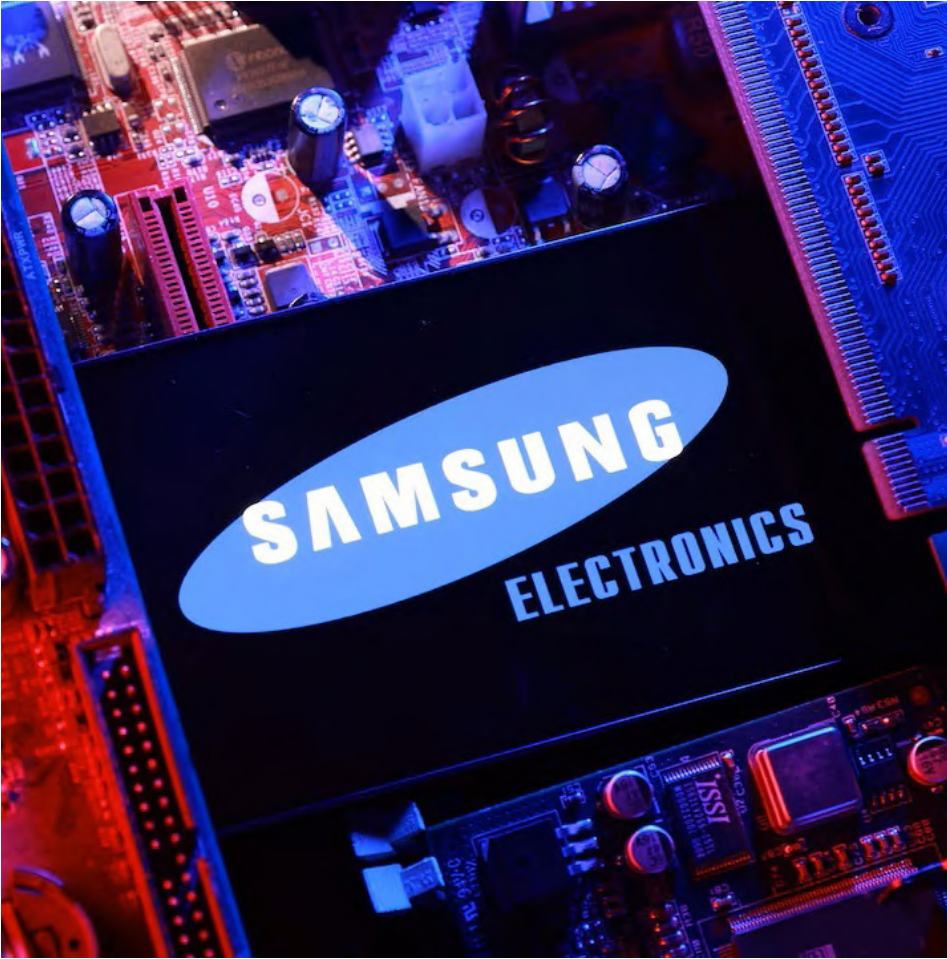
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Samsung beefs up advanced chip output after memory chip sales hit record high



▲ A Samsung Electronics logo and a computer motherboard appear in this illustration.

SAMSUNG Electronics expects demand for memory chips for the global AI infrastructure build-out to far outstrip the company’s supply, and said on Thursday it will focus on mass producing its most advanced chips to capitalise on the boom.

Samsung posted record quarterly revenue from its key memory chip business on Thursday, an impressive turnaround, after disappointing performances in the past several quarters as it struggled to catch up with competitors in the AI chip race.

The world’s top memory chipmaker said it plans to significantly expand production of high-bandwidth memory (HBM) chips, a key building block of artificial intelligence chip-sets, and sharply increase capital spending next year to meet rising demand.

“It is expected that customers’ demand for the next year will exceed our supply, even considering our investment and capacity expansion plan,” Kim Jaejune, a Samsung memory chip business executive, told analysts on its post-earnings call.

He said memory chip demand would be “much stronger and faster than usual,” accelerating price increases.

Its shares rose as much as 5.3% after its results, outpacing a 0.9% gain in the benchmark KOSPI (.KS11), opens new tab.

CHIP SHORTAGE EXPECTED TO PERSIST

Samsung’s bullish comments echo the robust outlook offered by its rival SK Hynix, opens new tab, which on Wednesday said it expected an extended chip “super cycle” spurred by the AI boom, as it had already sold out all of its chips for next year.

The turnaround reflects the unexpected boom in conventional chip prices, with supply squeezed by the industry’s shift to producing advanced AI chips, while demand is rising for data centres.

Kim said the shift was constraining supply

of memory for mobile phones and personal computers “and the supply limitations are expected to persist into next year.”

Samsung’s chip business, its main cash cow, posted an operating profit of 7 trillion won (\$4.92 billion) in the third quarter, up

80% from a year earlier. Its memory chip business reported record revenue of 26.7 trillion won, up from 22.3 trillion won a year ago.

Current-generation HBM3E chips are being sold to “all related customers,” Sam-

sung said, which suggested it has joined rivals such as SK Hynix in supplying the latest 12-layer HBM3E chips to artificial intelligence chip leader Nvidia

“Looking ahead to Q4, the rapid growth of the AI industry is expected to open up new market opportunities,” Samsung said.

Tech giants including OpenAI have in recent months announced multi-billion-dollar plans to invest in AI infrastructure despite uncertainty about returns, sparking investor questions as to whether the AI boom may be the next big bubble.

Samsung has been slow to capitalise on soaring demand for AI chips that benefited its rivals like SK Hynix, a key memory chip supplier to Nvidia, but the recent boom in commodity chip sales has been a boon to the South Korean tech giant that also makes smartphones, TVs, home appliances and flat screens.

Investors are looking for signs that Samsung is narrowing the gap with SK Hynix with the next-generation HBM4 chips.

Samsung said its HBM4 samples are being shipped to key clients, and it will focus on the mass production of HBM4 products next year, betting on rising demand.

It has already lined up customers for its “significantly expanded” HBM bit production plan for 2026 from this year, Kim said.

“However, as additional customer requests continue to come in, we are internally reviewing the possibility of further capacity expansion,” he said.

Samsung posted 12.2 trillion won in operating profit for the July to September period, in line with its estimate of 12.1 trillion won.

(Reuters)

OpenAI lays groundwork for juggernaut IPO at up to \$1 trillion valuation

OPEN AI is laying the groundwork for an initial public offering that could value the company at up to \$1 trillion, three people familiar with the matter said, in what could be one of the biggest IPOs of all time.

OpenAI is considering filing with securities regulators as soon as the second half of 2026, some of the people said. In preliminary discussions, the company has looked at raising \$60 billion at the low end and likely more, the people said. They cautioned that talks are early and plans - including the figures and timing - could change depending on business growth and market conditions.

Chief Financial Officer Sarah Friar has told some associates the company is aiming for a 2027 listing, the people said. But some advisers predict it could come even sooner, around late 2026.

“An IPO is not our focus, so we could not possibly have set a date,” an OpenAI spokesperson said. “We are building a durable business and advancing our mission so everyone benefits from AGI.”

The IPO preparations signal a new urgency inside the ChatGPT maker to tap public markets now that a complex restructuring is complete that reduces its reliance on Microsoft (MSFT.O), opens new tab. An



▲ OpenAI logo and rising stock graph are seen in this illustration.

IPO would open the door to more efficient capital raising and enable larger acquisitions using public stock, helping to finance CEO Sam Altman’s plans to pour trillions of dollars into AI infrastructure, according to people familiar with the company’s thinking.

With an annualized revenue run rate expected to reach about \$20 billion by year-end, losses are also mounting inside the \$500 billion company, the people said.

During a livestream on Tuesday, Altman addressed the possibility of

going public. “I think it’s fair to say it is the most likely path for us, given the capital needs that we’ll have,” he said.

IPO PREPARATIONS FOLLOW MAJOR RESTRUCTURING

OpenAI started out as a nonprofit in 2015. A few years later, the company overhauled its structure again so that the nonprofit would have oversight and control over the for-profit arm.

(Reuters)

US Treasury’s Bessent says China has approved TikTok transfer deal

CHINA has approved the transfer agreement for the short video app TikTok, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Thursday, adding that he expects it to move forward in coming weeks and months but giving no other details.

“In Kuala Lumpur, we finalised the TikTok agreement in terms of getting Chinese approval, and I would expect that would go forward in the coming weeks and months, and we’ll finally see a resolution to that,” he told Fox Business Network following President Donald Trump’s meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

China’s Commerce Ministry said in a statement earlier on Thursday that China would properly handle TikTok-related issues with the United States.

TikTok, which is owned by China-based ByteDance, did not immediately comment.

The fate of the app used by 170 million Americans has remained uncertain for more than 18 months after the U.S. Congress passed a law in 2024 that ordered TikTok’s Chinese owners to sell the app’s U.S. as-

sets by January 2025.

Trump signed an executive order on September 25 declaring that the plan to sell TikTok’s U.S. operations to a consortium of U.S. and global investors meets the national security requirements set out in the 2024 law and gave them 120 days to complete the transaction. He also delayed until January 20 enforcement of

Trump’s order said the algorithm will be retrained and monitored by the U.S. company’s security partners, and operation of the algorithm will be under the control of the new joint venture.

The agreement on TikTok’s U.S. operations includes the appointment by ByteDance of one of seven board members for the new entity, with Americans holding the other six seats.

ByteDance would hold less than 20% in TikTok U.S. to comply with requirements set out in the law that ordered it to be shut down by January 2025 if ByteDance did not sell its U.S. assets.

(Reuters)

Trump sets refugee ceiling at record-low 7,500 with focus on white South Africans

U.S. President Donald Trump set the refugee admissions ceiling at 7,500 for fiscal year 2026, the lowest cap on record, a White House document published on Thursday said, part of a broader effort to reshape refugee policies in the U.S. and worldwide.

Trump said in an annual refugee determination dated September 30 that admissions would be focused largely on South Africans from the country's white Afrikaner ethnic minority.

Trump has claimed Afrikaners face persecution based on their race in the Black-majority country, allegations the South African government has denied.

Trump paused all U.S. refugee admissions when he took office in January, saying they could only be restarted if they were established to be in the best interests of the U.S.

Weeks later, he launched an effort to bring in Afrikaners, sparking criticism from refugee supporters. Only 138 South Africans had entered the U.S. by early September, Reuters reported, opens new tab at the time.

In the determination published on Thursday, Trump said his administration would consider bringing in "other victims of illegal or unjust discrimination in their respective homelands."

An internal document drafted

by U.S. government officials in April, opens new tab suggested the administration could also prioritize bringing in Europeans as refugees if they were targeted for expressing certain views, such as opposition to mass migration or support for populist political parties. Europeans and other groups were not named in Trump's public refugee plan.

U.S. law requires the executive branch to consult with members of Congress before setting refugee levels, but Democratic lawmakers said on September 30 that the meeting never took place. In a statement on Thursday, U.S. Representative Jamie Raskin, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and other Democratic lawmakers said Trump's low refugee cap was both wrongheaded and lacked legal force.

"This bizarre presidential determination is not only morally indefensible, it is illegal and invalid," the lawmakers said.

"Dismantling it today is not putting America first," he said in a statement.

In a related move, the White House said it would move oversight of the refugee support programs from the State Department to the Department of Health and Human Services. (Reuters)



▲ People from the first group of white South Africans granted refugee status, listen to welcoming remarks during a meet and greet event, at Dulles International Airport, in Dulles, Virginia, U.S.

US gets rare earth reprieve from China, but not rollback



▲ A boat moves past a cargo ship with containers at a terminal of the Yantian port in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, China.

CHINA has agreed to delay the introduction of its latest round of rare earth export controls as part of a deal agreed between Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, but earlier restrictions on the critical minerals

that have upended global trade remain. Rare earths, 17 elements which play tiny but vital roles in cars, planes and weapons, have emerged from obscurity to become China's most potent source of negotiating leverage thanks to export restrictions introduced this year which allow Beijing to cut off foreign customers dependent on Chinese supply.

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TRUMP CALLS RARE EARTHS ISSUE 'SETTLED'

Trump and Xi met in South Korea for a nearly two-hour summit on Thursday, after which the U.S. president said China had agreed to keep rare earth exports flowing and the issue was "settled".

Shortly afterwards China announced it would pause for one year export controls introduced on October 9, when Beijing expanded its rare earth export regime to include new materials and rules, according to a release from the Ministry of Commerce.

However, the pause appears to leave in place restrictions introduced in April which control exports of seven rare earths and, notably, the rare earth magnets crucial to auto-makers, defence companies and

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, also speaking on Air Force One on Thursday, said China would not impose its proposed rare earth controls. He did not mention controls introduced in April.

It was the April controls which, within

weeks, caused shortages across the auto supply chain, forcing automakers to pause production at some plants.

China's statement, which also included a pledge to study and refine plans, provides enough ambiguity and flexibility for Beijing to deliver on a rare earth deal with the U.S., according to Tim Zhang, founder of Singapore-based Edge Research.

"Overall, we would call this a tactical stabilisation at this moment," he said.

BATTERIES AND DIAMONDS

China's export control announcements on October 9 also included new restrictions on electric battery equipment and industrial diamonds.

The battery curbs sparked panic among some foreign customers of China's world-leading battery sector, leading India's Reliance Industries and others to rush shipments out of the country before the early November deadline.

It is unclear whether the commitment to pause the October measures also includes batteries and industrial diamonds. China's Ministry Of Commerce did not immediately respond to questions from Reuters about the subject.

(Reuters)



By Siphesihle Dlamini
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LOOKING to unwind and enjoy some great entertainment this weekend? Eswatini Daily News brings you the ultimate guide to the best hangout spots in town! So, grab your favourite drink, round up your crew, and get ready for a weekend full of fun and unforgettable moments.

►► **OUTPOURING WORSHIP NIGHT**
When: Friday
Where: Jesus Calls Worship Centre
Fee: Free

The upcoming 'Outpouring Worship Night' has announced the addition of the esteemed Pastor Collen Maluleke and the dynamic Sound of Goshen to their already impressive lineup. This event, scheduled for Friday, October 31, 2025, at 6 pm, will be hosted at the Jesus Calls Worship Centre, located opposite Voctim in Matsapha, and is open to the public free of charge. Pastor Collen Maluleke, a globally recognised worship minister and visionary leader of Goshen City Church, is set to bring his powerful anointing and spiritual presence to the night. Known for his transformative worship songs such as 'Ukhona,' 'Shine Jesus Shine,' and 'You Are Glorious,' Pastor Collen has established himself as a household name in contemporary African gospel music. His previous collaborations with the iconic Spirit of Praise and his close spiritual relationship with Apostle Joshua Selman have further solidified his influence and leadership within the gospel community. Joining Pastor Collen will be Sound of Goshen, adding a fresh and vibrant sound to the worship experience. They will share the stage with other notable worship ministers including Oncemore Six, Shekhiyah Motsa, Psalmist Muzi, and the in-house worship group Rushing Wind Music, all of whom have been praised for their anointed and dynamic worship styles.

►► **INTENTIONAL PRAISE**
LIVE RECORDING
When: Friday
Where: GPI Manzini
Fee: Free

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.

►► **BREMA TAKEOVER PARTY**
When: Friday
Where: Neves Bar in KaNongoloza
Fee: Free

South African top producer Blaq Major is set to headline the highly anticipated Brema Takeover Party. Scheduled for October 31, 2025, at Neves Bar in KaNongoloza, this party is poised to be a landmark celebration featuring an impressive lineup of artists, including Snapking, Snolove, Mr Kangaroo, Ugesi Oshisayo, and Preedy P, among others. Best of all, entry to this vibrant event is completely free, inviting music lovers from all walks of life to join the festivities. The Brema Takeover Party is more than just a night of music; it is a cultural gathering that embodies the spirit of unity and joy through sound. With Blaq Major at the helm, the event promises an immersive experience where electronic music enthusiasts and casual partygoers alike can revel in the dynamic energy of live performances. With its stellar lineup, free admission, and the magnetic presence of one of South Africa's most exciting producers, this event is a must-attend for anyone passionate about electronic music and the pulsating sounds of Amapiano.

►► **FRIDAY AFTERWORK CHILL**
When: Friday
Where: 23:28 Lounge
Fee: Free

The weekend is about to kick off in style as 23:28 Lounge, one of the hottest spots for nightlife in Eswatini, hosts the highly anticipated Friday Afterwork Chill this Friday. The event invites all fun-loving patrons to unwind after a long work week and dive into an evening of vibrant entertainment, cool vibes, and irresistible drink specials. From 6 pm till late, the lounge will transform into a pulsating haven of music and dance, with none other than DJ MBO, Thick B and DJ 1D taking

centre stage. Known for their electrifying mixes and ability to keep crowds moving, the duo promises to deliver a sonic experience that blends the freshest local and international beats. The Friday Afterwork Chill isn't just about music, it's about creating a laid-back social atmosphere where friends, colleagues, and weekend revellers can mingle, relax, and let loose.

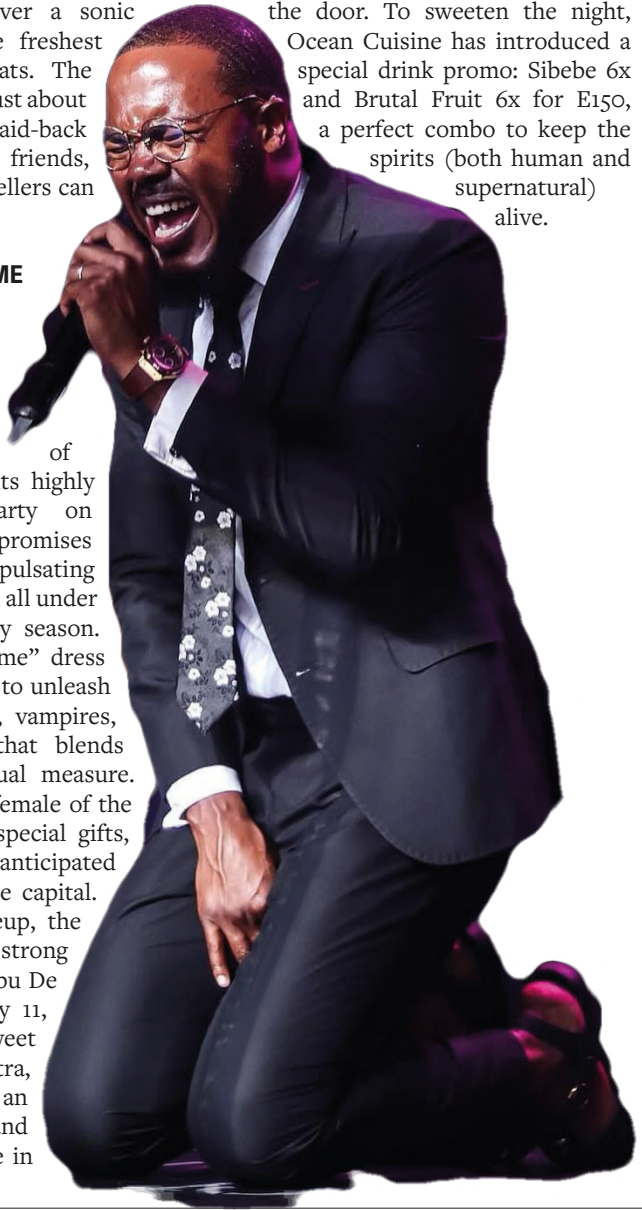
►► **HALLOWEEN COSTUME**
When: Friday
Where: Ocean Cuisine
Fee: Free

The Ocean Cuisine Restaurant & Lounge is set to turn into a cauldron of fun and fright as it hosts its highly anticipated Halloween Party on October 31, 2025. The event promises a night of eerie excitement, pulsating beats, and creative costumes, all under the moonlit spell of spooky season. With its "Halloween Costume" dress code, guests are encouraged to unleash their inner witches, ghouls, vampires, and villains for a night that blends horror and glamour in equal measure. The best-dressed male and female of the night will walk away with special gifts, making this one of the most anticipated costume competitions in the capital. According to the event lineup, the decks will be dominated by a strong ensemble of DJs including Sbu De Drum DJ, DJ Black, Twenty 11, Fantasy, Bisto, Bandora, Sweet Shandis, Teesto, and Cnatra, a lineup that guarantees an all-night rave of rhythm and thrill. Entry is free for those in

full Halloween costume, while those not dressed for the occasion will pay E50 at the door. To sweeten the night, Ocean Cuisine has introduced a special drink promo: Sibebe 6x and Brutal Fruit 6x for E150, a perfect combo to keep the spirits (both human and supernatural) alive.



Your weekend starts here





Eswatini's Ivyson Africa Tour postponed

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE much-anticipated Eswatini leg of the Ivyson Africa Tour, originally scheduled for October 31, 2025, at Mdzimba View Shisanyama, has been postponed to a date yet to be confirmed.

This delay comes as a disappointment to many fans who were eagerly awaiting one of the most significant musical events of the year in the region. The Ivyson Africa Tour, named after South African hip-hop sensation Nasty C's moniker "Ivyson," is more than just a concert series. It represents a vibrant movement that celebrates personal growth, cultural identity, and legacy building, particularly resonating with the youth and creative communities across Africa. The tour champions ambition, self-belief, and the relentless pursuit of dreams, making it a beacon of inspiration for many young people striving to make their mark.

Vuyani Ndzimandze, the curator of the event, highlighted the importance of bringing the Ivyson Tour to Eswatini.

"The Eswatini edition is about connecting that energy with our local creative culture, giving fans a world-class experience while showcasing the best homegrown talent," he said.

Ticket sales reflected the high level of excitement surrounding the event. Early bird tickets sold out rapidly, underscoring the strong demand. Currently, general pre-sale tickets are available at E200, making the event accessible to a broad audience. For those seeking a more exclusive experience, Ivyson VIP tickets priced at E500 offer enhanced access and amenities, while Ivyson Max tickets at E800 promise premium seating and exclusive perks. At the door, general admission tickets were to be sold for E250.

Ndzimandze assured fans that the production values would meet the highest standards, matching the scale and ambition of the event. "Expect top-tier sound, lights, visuals, and an atmosphere that will leave people talking long after the night ends," he said. "From Nasty C's unmatched performance to a lineup of local stars bringing fire to the stage, this is going to be Eswatini's biggest music moment of the year."



▲ Young Zesh.

'Senibeketele' hit 90 000 views

ESWATINI music star Young Zesh is making waves in the Eswatini music scene with his latest single, 'Senibeketele' has hit 90,000 views in 3 months on YouTube.

The visuals elevate the song's already soaring popularity. Since its release, 'Senibeketele' audio has quickly gained traction, amassing over 39,000 views on YouTube, showcasing the growing influence of Young Zesh in the local music industry.

This impressive reception marks a significant milestone for the artist, who is also debuting the single under his newly registered label, Mabona Abulawe Records.

'Senibeketele' is more than just another song in Young Zesh's growing discography; it is a heartfelt tribute to the unwavering support he has received from his fans throughout his musical journey. In an exclusive interview, Young Zesh shared the inspiration behind the song, highlighting the importance of his loyal fanbase.

Encouragement

"This song was inspired by my lovely fans who have been there for me since day one," he expressed, emphasising how their encouragement has fueled his passion for music. The track aims to convey love and appreciation, serving as a heartfelt acknowledgement of the crucial role his fans play in his life and career. The creative process behind 'Senibeketele' was nothing short of electrifying. Young Zesh collaborated closely with renowned producers DJ Citie and Jimmy Boy SD, creating an environment filled with creativity and energy. "DJ Citie and I created the song together. He was making the beat while I was writing the hook. It's an African Trap song, produced by DJ Citie NTM. S/O to him for the wonderful work," he said, reflecting on the synergy that fueled the creation of the track.

Young Zesh is actively encouraging his fans to engage with the song. "I would love to plead with everyone to share the link, stream, like, and comment," he urged, recognising the power of social media and digital platforms in amplifying his music and connecting with listeners.

MoAGS celebrates a decade

THE Mother of All Gospel Shows (MOAGS) is poised to celebrate a remarkable milestone in 2026, its 10th anniversary.

Over the past decade, MOAGS has established itself as a cornerstone of the gospel music industry, marked by unwavering commitment, consistent excellence, and significant growth. This landmark event will honour ten years of impactful contributions to gospel music, highlighting the show's role in nurturing talent, empowering artists, and expanding the reach of gospel music across the region.

Since its inception in 2016, the Mother of All Gospel Shows has been dedicated to discovering and promoting new gospel artists. Through its Rising Star talent search program, MOAGS has identified and recorded over twenty promising artists, providing them with invaluable exposure and opportunities to develop their craft.

Notable artists who have emerged from this

platform include Inkhosi Mpila Jr., Phindah Mnisie, Nokuphila Dlamini, Nosipho Motsa, Mntshali Nduduzo Matse, Gcebile Maseko, Mmeli Mamba, Ntando Ngcamphalala, Mzayoni Tsabedze, Fakazi Samuel, Lucia Kateel, and Lomkhosi Makhubu, among many others. These artists have gone on to make significant contributions to gospel music, thanks to the solid foundation and support provided by MOAGS.

Gospel

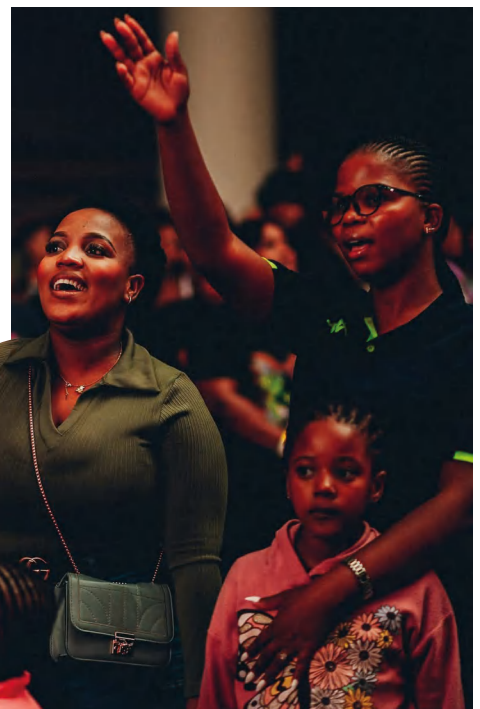
The show has also been a stage for gospel music giants, hosting renowned performers such as Thina Zungu, Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors, Mzwakhe Myeni, Takie Ndoe, Oncemore Six, Shongwe and Khuphuka, Mthunzi Numba, Ncubeko Mbatha, Lusada Beja, Neyi Zimu, Sbu Noah, Mpumi Mtsweni, Sindi Ntombela, Sphiwo Ndoni, Tive Temhlaba Choir, Linda Dlamini, Nothando Hlophe, Ndawonye, Frans Dlamini, and Nelly Siwela. These artists have graced both

indoor and outdoor venues, including the Old Trade Fair and Mavuso Trade Centre, enhancing the show's reputation as a premier gospel music event.

The 2026 edition of MOAGS will be a grand celebration of God's faithfulness and a reflection on a decade of dedication to gospel music. It promises to be a memorable occasion filled with revival, inspiration, and joy. Attendees can look forward to an unforgettable experience that honours the past while looking forward to the future of gospel music.

Tickets for this milestone event will be released soon, inviting gospel music lovers and supporters to join in the celebration. The Mother of All Gospel Shows continues to be a beacon of hope and a catalyst for growth in the gospel music industry, and the 10th anniversary promises to be a testament to its enduring legacy and impact.

► Gospel fanatics in song and praise.



Emtee makes amends with A-Reece

RAPPER Emtee has officially ended his brief fallout with A-Reece after their recent online exchange stirred up the local hip hop scene.

During one of his infamous Instagram lives, Emtee took a moment to make peace, telling fans he has nothing but love for A-Reece.

“Hey Reece, I’m sorry n***a. I’m sorry about whatever misunderstanding we had going on, but I got nothing against Reece, I love Reece, man,” he said.

The drama started when Emtee went live earlier this month, addressing A-Reece’s fan-base, The Slimes, who had questioned why he did not promote A-Reece’s new album.

“The Slimes are mad at me for not posting A-Reece’s album. Who posts my s***?” Emtee asked, adding that hip hop has always been a competitive space.

“This s*** is a competitive sport. I f*** with everybody, but I ain’t no fan of nobody. Reece is my young n***a, I ain’t no fan of his, but I know he can rap for sure.” His comments quickly went viral and sparked a debate about whether South African rappers should publicly support each other’s work. Emtee clarified that reposting someone’s album is not an obligation, saying admiration does not always mean promotion.

A-Reece later responded on his Instagram story, resharing the clip with laughing emojis and writing, “I ain’t posting nobody’s s*** no

more, the GOAT says this s*** is a competitive sport.”

He tagged Emtee and added, “Is that why you didn’t come to my birthday celebration? U foul for that twin.” The post reignited the conversation, and Emtee did not bite his tongue with his reply. “What was foul? Me not coming to fonem birthday nton nton or postin blud new project? Aren’t you n****s tired of sucking me dry? I’m not y’all h**!” he wrote.

A-Reece clapped back at Emtee and reiterated his birthday comment, adding that they should speak directly on the phone instead of “reading into these lame ass media outlets.”

“I don’t care if you post my shit or not. My comment on that was intended to be facetious. but yeah, you’re foul for not

showing up to my birthday celebration after saying you would and not saying anything after you didn’t.

“Especially since I showed up for you at your show even

though you didn’t hit me up directly about it. Answer your phone bro I don’t want smoke stop reading into these lame ass media outlets and talk to ur boy.” The back-and-forth had social media buzzing, with fans convinced a new beef was brewing. But A-Reece later cleared the air. When a fan asked if they were really beefing, he replied, “No.” He went on to show respect for Emtee, writing, “Bro been subtly flagrant, seldomly, but that n***a helped change my life. I don’t want smoke with bro unless he passing me a joint, you heard?”

The two rappers share a long history dating back to their Ambitious Entertainment days, when they collaborated on the hit track “Couldn’t” and have since formed a brotherly relationship, working on music together.

Fans were happy about their reconciliation, seeing it as a full-circle moment for two of South Africa’s most respected lyricists. (IOL)



▲ *Rapper Emtee has officially ended his brief fallout with A-Reece after their recent online exchange stirred up the local hip hop scene.*



Soul Brothers unveils new album

LEGENDARY mbaqanga group Soul Brothers is celebrating 50 years in the music business.

This year, the group will release 50 Years of Ogandaganda — The Legacy of Soul Brothers and will embark on a tour of Mpumalanga and Kwa-Zulu-Natal.

They will kick-start the tour in Piet Retief Town Hall on October 31 before performing at the Empangeni Town Hall on November 1, with more towns and cities to be announced later. Black Moses Ngwenya, the last surviving member of the original mbhaqanga and soul band, has dug deep within his archives to find unheard and unreleased music made by the Soul Brothers, dating back to the 1970s when they started making songs together.

The Soul Brothers are known for popularising and modernising the rural mbaqanga sound. Formed in 1970 by lead singer David Masondo

and keyboard player and producer Ngwenya, they became the pioneers of mbaqanga.

Ngwenya explained that the band began informally in the early 1970s and released its first album in 1975.

The group initially started with five group members: Tuza Mthethwa, who passed away in a car crash in 1979; Zenzele Mchunu, who fell ill and died in 1984; and America Zulu, who left the band to join the taxi business in Mpumalanga. He was later shot and killed.

Black Moses Ngwenya and David Masondo, who also passed away in 2015 after hospitalisation, remained members of the group.

Retirement out of the question

Today, Ngwenya remains the last standing member, and he wishes to continue the legacy.

Speaking to Sunday World, he said this was not a retirement album, stating that he would continue to raise the Soul Brothers flag until his

last days.

“I have been the last standing member for the past 10 years. I have made sure the band does not die or become forgotten. We recorded about four albums after David passed on,” Ngwenya said.

The last album he released under the Soul Brothers title was Uhamba Naye in 2023, and it was a success. The new music features unreleased songs recorded in their early days. “We were used to releasing albums on CDs, but times have changed, and we will release singles on streaming platforms. We will adapt.

“All the music in this project was recorded in my studio and premises, so I kept a lot of what we didn’t use in the archives.

“I went back to those old files, and we worked on the music and used a little bit of AI [artificial intelligence] here and there, and we came up with the 10-track album,” Ngwenya said. (Sunday World)

Sol Phenduka’s dark truth about gambling addiction

RADIO personality and podcaster, Sol Phenduka, got candid about his gambling addiction on social media.

Phenduka replied to a tweet from a social media user who asked him: “Ek se, Sol, do you gamble as well?”

He replied, “I used to gamble. It ruined my life and held me back a few years.” After admitting that his gambling addiction ruined his life, he added that he does not involve himself in it anymore and advised people to gamble responsibly.

“I no longer gamble. If you do, PLEASE GAMBLE responsibly,” he added.



▲ *Radio personality and podcaster, Sol Phenduka.*

Phenduka’s story probably resonates with many people who are also currently facing the struggle. A lot of people come online and share how bad their gambling addiction was or still is, resulting in them losing their cars, houses, jobs and families.

It has been revealed that in a GeoPoll study from April 2025, 83% of South African respondents had placed a bet, ranking the country first on the continent, according to an article by “IOL”.

Even students in our country are grappling with this addiction that sticks out like a sore thumb, as many of them use their allowances to fund their gambling habits. According to ActionSA MP Malebo Kobe, statistics revealed that students are using their NSFAS allowances to gamble.

“We are deeply concerned by reports that some students at tertiary education institutions

are using their NSFAS allowances to gamble on online betting platforms.

This is a tragic reflection of how government’s failures are driving young South Africans to desperation,” she said in a press release.

Joining in the conversation about this nationwide issue is Pick n Pay CEO Sean Summers, who has raised concerns about the online gambling sector in South Africa.

During an interview with Cape Talk radio, he shared that South Africa should consider banning the marketing and advertising of online gambling.

“If you look at certain countries overseas, like Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy have in fact made a move to totally ban any marketing and advertising of online gambling. It’s a complete scourge. (IOL)

Drinking too much alcohol is a leading cause of fatty liver disease.

HEAVY drinking can cause serious liver problems, including alcohol-associated fatty liver disease.

It's common in people who regularly drink too much. When you drink too much alcohol, it makes it hard for your liver to work properly. As a result, fat can build up in liver cells, where it's not supposed to be. Over time, this can lead to more severe liver conditions, such as alcoholic hepatitis or cirrhosis. Quitting alcohol is a crucial step toward getting better. Because alcohol withdrawal from going "cold turkey" can be risky for people with alcohol use disorder, work with your health care provider on getting sober. If you stop alcohol early enough, it may be possible to undo some of the liver damage.

There's no safe amount of alcohol consumption.

Even moderate drinking may have health risks, especially if you already have liver problems such as fatty liver disease. That includes people with MASLD or MASH, which are types of fatty liver disease not caused by alcohol. (MASLD stands for metabolic-associated steatotic liver disease. MASH, short for metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis, is what it's called when MASLD gets worse.) For people with fatty liver disease, any amount of alcohol can worsen liver damage and hinder recovery. Here's why: The liver is already compromised, and adding alcohol to the mix can mean more inflammation and further fat buildup in the liver. It could also mean getting cirrhosis sooner. Not drinking alcohol is one of the key steps you can take to help get your liver's health on track.

Alcohol-related fatty liver disease often doesn't cause symptoms at first.

At first, alcohol-related liver disease may not show any symptoms. As a result, many people don't know that damage is happening in their liver. When symptoms do appear, usually when the condition has worsened, they can include:

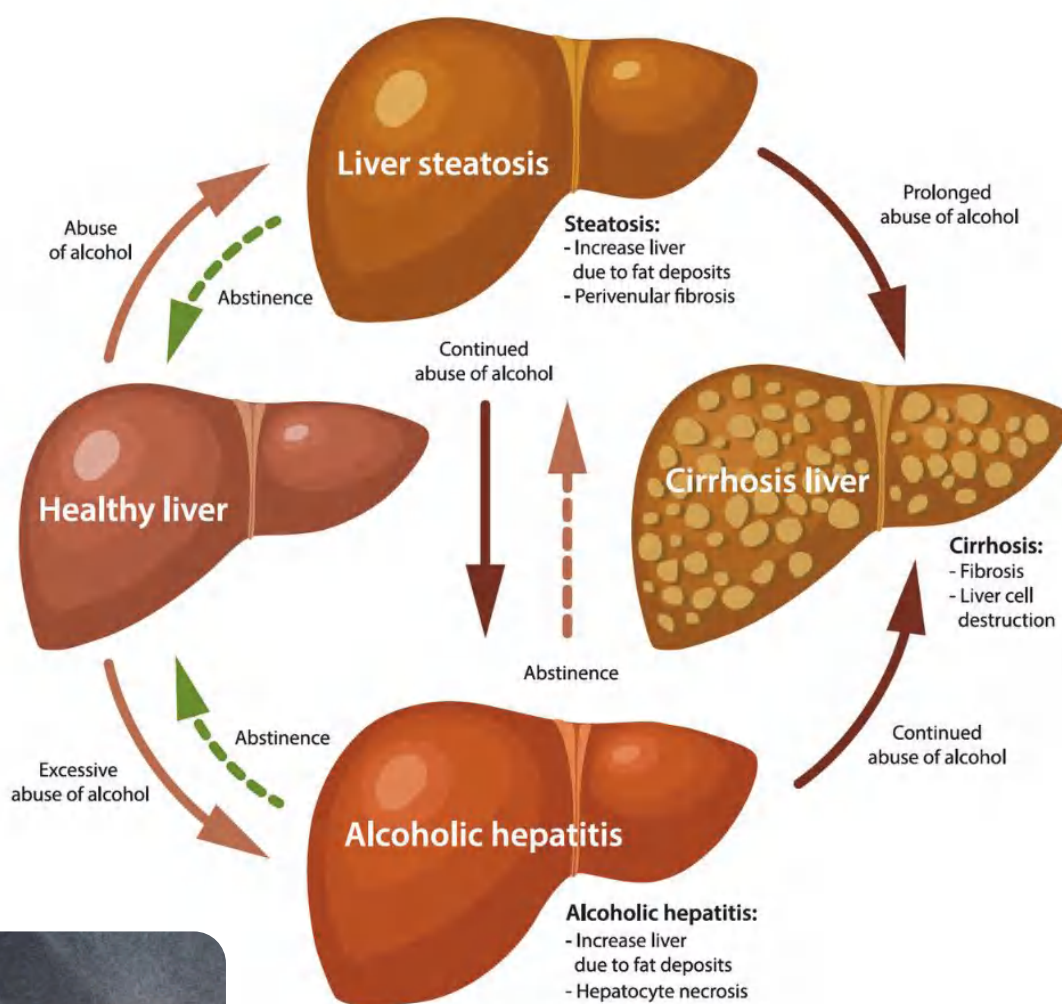
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Swelling in the legs and belly
- Confusion
- Unintended weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Blood in your stool or vomit

To help prevent alcohol-related fatty liver disease from getting to that point, it's important to keep up with regular medical checkups and liver function tests. And even though it can be hard to do, let your doctor know how much you drink and how often. This can help your doctor suggest the right changes that need to be made to help head off serious liver problems.

Alcohol-related fatty liver disease can affect how your brain works.

In later stages, alcohol-related liver disease can affect your brain and nervous system. It could make someone feel upset or confused, with changing moods. They might also feel numbness or tingling in their arms or legs.

Things to know about fatty liver and alcohol



Drinking alcohol with fatty liver can lead to other, more serious conditions.

Continuing to drink with alcohol-related liver disease can make liver conditions worse. Alcoholic hepatitis, a type of liver inflammation, can develop. Symptoms can include jaundice, fever, and belly pain. If someone with alcohol-related hepatitis keeps drinking alcohol, they can get cirrhosis, a late-stage liver disease in which scar tissue has replaced healthy liver tissue. The scarring makes it even harder for the liver to work. That, in turn, can lead to liver failure, which is a life-threatening condition. Liver cancer is another risk if you have cirrhosis, but it doesn't always happen.

You may reverse or prevent future damage to your liver by avoiding alcohol.

The good news is that avoiding alcohol may help reverse or prevent further damage to your liver, if you make that change soon enough. The liver has a remarkable ability to heal itself, if given the chance. Not drinking gives the liver a break from the stress of

dealing with alcohol. This can help your liver work better and improve your overall health. Along with avoiding alcohol, the lifestyle habits that are good for your entire body – like eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and sticking to a healthy weight – also support liver health.

If you have trouble cutting out alcohol, there are options to help you quit.

Quitting alcohol can be challenging, especially if you've been drinking heavily for a long time. Alcohol withdrawal symptoms, such as anxiety, tremors, and nausea, can make it tough to stop on your own. It's important to seek medical advice before you try to stop drinking, as withdrawal can be dangerous.

There are options to help you quit, including counseling, support groups, and medications that ease withdrawal symptoms. Sometimes, if someone has severe alcohol use disorder, they might need to go to a supervised detox program. Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, and there are resources to support you on your journey to sobriety.

WebMD

YOU eat clean, you exercise, and you even take meds for it, but your cholesterol is still too high.

That might be because of sneaky culprits you don't know about. Here are a few.

You Inherited It

About 1 in every 200 adults in the U.S. has a condition called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH). It's a genetic disorder you can get from either one or both of your parents that prevents your body from processing cholesterol the way it should.

If you have FH, you've had it since you were born. It means you started out with high LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) levels, and they continued to rise. You may not show symptoms until you're an adult.

Because your body can't get rid of cholesterol, it builds up in your arteries. This makes it harder for blood to flow and makes your arteries themselves stiffer. Over time, this leads to heart disease. In fact, people with FH have 20 times the risk of getting heart disease than those without it.

Cholesterol can also build up in other parts of your body when you have FH. It might show in these parts of your body:

► **Skin.** Cholesterol deposits can make spots on your hands, elbows, and knees, or the skin around your eyes.

► **Tendons.** Your Achilles tendon and some tendons in your hands can get thicker.

► **Eyes.** You may get a white or gray ring around the colored part (iris) of your eye.

Although FH makes it harder to get your cholesterol under control, it can be treated. You may need more than one cholesterol medication, such as:

- ▶ Statins, which block a substance the liver needs to make cholesterol.

- ▶ Ezetimibe (Zetia), which reduces the amount of cholesterol you absorb from the food you eat.

- ▶ PCSK9 inhibitors, which help the liver absorb more LDL cholesterol to get it out of your bloodstream.

Some people with severe FH may need to have special procedures periodically to filter excess cholesterol out of the blood. Some extreme cases may require a liver transplant.

You're Eating Hidden Fat

You may think eating food labeled “cholesterol-free” is helping your heart. But it’s just as important to keep tabs on the amounts of saturated and trans fats in your food. Look at saturated fat, trans fat, and total calories in one serving. The American Heart Association recommends limiting saturated fat to less than 6% of your total daily calories.

To help do this, limit red or processed meat and whole milk dairy products and skip sugar- or sodium-filled foods and fried food. Choose those with fats and oils near the end of their ingredients lists, or better yet, stick to foods you know are in the healthy heart zone, such as:

- Skim milk, low-fat or fat-free dairy products

- ▶ Fruits
- ▶ Vegetables
- ▶ Whole grains
- ▶ Poultry
- ▶ Fish



Why is my cholesterol still high?



High Cholesterol levels

rol is one of the leading causes of heart attacks. Cholesterol has two types: the low-density lipoprotein (LDL), which transports the "bad" cholesterol, and the high-density lipoprotein (HDL), which is the healthy cholesterol. Having high LDL levels raises your risk of having heart disease. Statins can help you significantly reduce your cholesterol level.

- ▶ Nuts
- ▶ Nontropical vegetable oils

Your Exercise Needs Tweaking

Take stock of your physical activity. Are you getting enough of the right kinds of healthy movement? Go for repetitive exercise that works more than one muscle group at a time and gets your heart pumping for at least 30 minutes 5-7 times a week. Going all-out, especially if your body isn't used to it, could lead to injury, making it harder to get physical activity in over the long term.

Try these cholesterol-lowering exercises:

- ▶ Brisk walks
- ▶ Cycling
- ▶ Swimming

- ▶ Yoga
- ▶ Your Medications

Check with your doctor to see if any of the meds you take -- for any health conditions -- could be causing a rise in your cholesterol levels. Some medications for asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and connective-tissue disorders can raise your cholesterol. Acne medications called retinoids that have vitamin A in them may also cause your cholesterol to spike.

Certain birth control medications with progestin may both lower your HDL ("good" cholesterol) and raise your LDL ("bad" cholesterol).

And if you have a glass of grapefruit juice in the morning along with your cholesterol-lowering statins, you may need to choose another juice. Grapefruit juice

has a chemical that can interfere with the enzymes that break down statins in your digestive system. Ask your doctor how much grapefruit is safe for you to have.

You Still Smoke

Cigarette smoke has thousands of chemicals that damage blood vessels and increase your cholesterol levels. One chemical called acrolein stops HDL from carrying cholesterol away from fatty deposits toward the liver. The liver is the place cholesterol is turned into waste so it can leave the body. When this process is disrupted, cholesterol can build up, leading to narrowing of your arteries (atherosclerosis).

WebMD

NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ A general view of athletes in action during the women's cycling points race at the UCI Track World Championships in Santiago, Chile.



▲ An artilleryman of the 82nd Separate Airborne Assault Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces fires a D-30 howitzer towards Russian troops, near the frontline town of Dobropillia in Donetsk region, Ukraine.



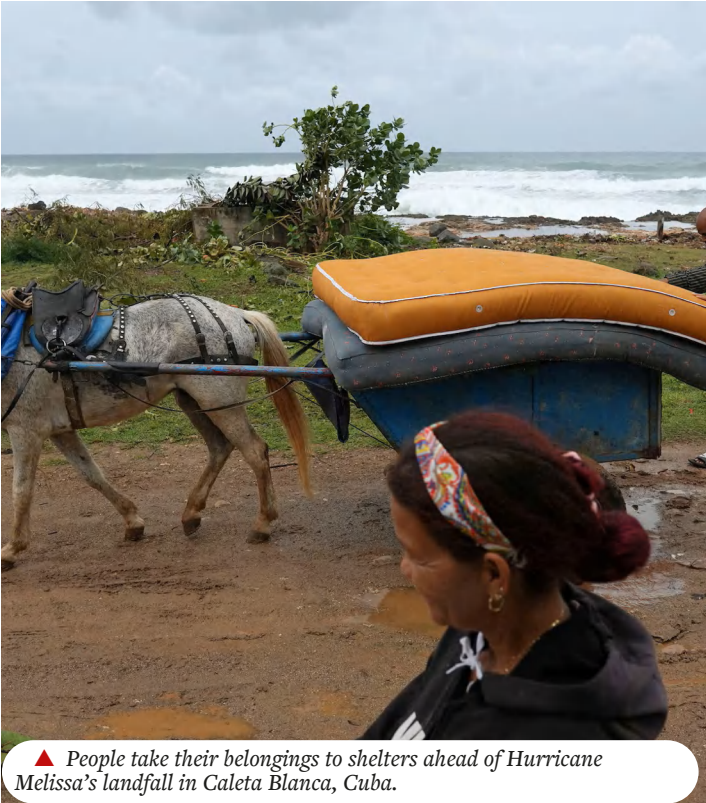
▲ On its first flight, NASA's experimental quiet supersonic X-59 Quesst aircraft takes off from Runway 7 at Palmdale USAF Plant 42 in Palmdale, California.



▲ A worker sprays fumigation vapour to stem the spread of dengue virus in Peshawar, Pakistan.



▲ A woman looks out from inside a house after Hurricane Melissa made landfall, in Alligator Pond, Jamaica.



▲ People take their belongings to shelters ahead of Hurricane Melissa's landfall in Caleta Blanca, Cuba.

Paunovic replaces Stojkovic as Serbia coach

SERBIA on Thursday appointed former Real Oviedo boss Veljko Paunovic as their new national team coach, following the resignation of Dragan Stojkovic earlier this month.

Paunovic, who led Serbia's youth team to the Under-20 World Cup title in 2015, will be tasked with turning around the senior side's 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign.

"His priority was neither the contract nor the financial terms, but to make himself immediately available and take over the team at such an important moment," Serbian football federation general secretary Branko Radujko said.

Serbia are third in Group K, one point behind second-placed Albania in the race for a play-off place.

They face already-qualified England at Wembley on November 13 and host Latvia three days later in their final two qualifiers for next year's World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"The result of these two matches will in no way affect Paunovic's future status," Radujko added.

Stojkovic resigned on October 12 after Serbia lost 1-0 to Albania at home.

"This defeat should not have happened, and I accept responsibility," Stojkovic said after the match.

They bounced back in their next game with a 3-1 win at Andorra under interim boss Zoran Mirkovic.

Paunovic, whose former clubs in-



▲ Former Real Oviedo boss Veljko Paunovic.

clude Guadalajara, Tigres, Reading and Chicago Fire, was sacked by Oviedo earlier this month with the club 17th in the LaLiga table.

Serbia have qualified for three of four World Cups as an independent nation, but have never got past the group phase. (Supersport)

Saudis turned down Messi stint ahead of 2026 World Cup

SAUDI Arabia declined an offer to sign Lionel Messi for a short-term stint in the Saudi Pro League before next year's World Cup, according to a senior sports official.

"During the last Club World Cup, Messi's team contacted me and offered for him to play in Saudi Arabia because the MLS will stop for nearly four months," Abdullah Hammad, CEO of the Mahd Sports Academy, said during a podcast with Saudi platform Thmanyah.

"The player wanted to remain in shape and prepare himself for the upcoming 2026 World Cup."

"This happened with David Beckham when he was with Los Angeles Galaxy and went to AC Milan (in 2010)," he added.

Eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi moved to Inter Miami in 2023 after being linked with a switch to Saudi Arabia. That followed a two-year spell with Paris Saint-Germain, the club he joined in 2021 after ending his long association with Barcelona.

Hammad explained that he relayed the offer to the minister of sports, who rejected it. "The minister made it clear that the Saudi league would not serve as a preparation platform for other tournaments," he said.



▲ Lionel Messi.

In response to a question about whether Saudi Arabia had rejected Messi, he replied: "That's true."

Since the arrival of Cristiano Ronaldo at Al-Nassr after the last World Cup, the Saudi league has attracted

numerous stars from major European clubs, including Neymar and Karim Benzema, while the kingdom has been awarded the hosting rights for the 2034 World Cup. (Supersport)

Sinner cruises in Paris Masters opener, Zverev keeps title defence alive

JANNIK Sinner began his tilt at a Paris Masters crown which would return him to world No 1 with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Zizou Bergs on Wednesday, while reigning champion Alexander Zverev battled through a lengthy three-setter.

Following the surprise exit of world No 1 Carlos Alcaraz at the round of 32 stage on Tuesday, a maiden crown in the ATP 1000 event in the French capital would return Sinner to the summit of the world rankings.

But the Italian second seed showed no signs of feeling the weight of that pressure in his opening match at La Defense Arena – the top eight seeds received byes through the first round.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Sinner is known for his efficiency on-court and won through against 41st-ranked Belgian Bergs in one hour and 27 minutes without facing a single break point.

The 24-year-old methodically engineered breaks of his own early in both sets to seal his spot in the third round, where he will meet Francisco Cerundolo after the Argentinian earlier bested Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia.

Germany's Zverev battled past Argentine world number 49 Camilo Ugo Carabelli 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 7-5 to open his title defence.

He will next take on Spanish 15th seed Alejandro Davidovich Fokina following his victory over Frenchman Arthur Cazaux.

A hardfought tie-break separated Zverev and Ugo Carabelli in the opening set, before the 28-year-old cruised through the second in 35 minutes.

It then seemed Zverev might follow Alcaraz in crashing out early at La Defense Arena when the third seed fell 1-3 behind in the decider.

But he hit back instantly on his opponent's next service game, before securing the crucial break at 5-5 to keep his title defence alive.

DIMITROV WITHDRAWS
Norwegian eighth seed Casper Ruud was felled in his opening match at the tournament by 50th-ranked German Daniel Altmaier 6-3, 7-5.

Former world No 1 Daniil Medvedev of Russia was given a walkover to the third round after Grigor Dimitrov withdrew with a shoulder issue.

The 34-year-old Bulgarian's return from the pectoral injury, which forced him to retire when leading eventual champion Sinner two sets to love in the fourth round at Wimbledon in July, unfortunately lasted only one match before his latest fitness set-back.

Cousins Valentin Vacherot and Arthur Rinderknech opened the day's action in a repeat of their Shanghai Masters final from earlier in October.

And just like in China, it was the Monegasque Vacherot who claimed victory in three sets against the Frenchman.

Felix Auger-Aliassime again came from behind to keep intact his chances of reaching the ATP Finals next month in Turin.

This time the Canadian ninth seed ground out a 5-7, 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/4) in over three hours on court against hometown player Alexandre Muller.

Auger-Aliassime is currently ninth in the race to the eight-man season-ending tournament.

(Supersport)



▲ Jannik Sinner.

Barcelona face Elche with Pedri out and squad plagued by injuries

BARCELONA will look to recover from their 2-1 El Clasico defeat by Real Madrid when they host Elche in LaLiga on Sunday, but they will do so without midfielder Pedri, who is set to miss several weeks due to a leg muscle injury.

The Catalan club, second in the standings and trailing leaders Real Madrid by five points, have been hit hard by injuries this season.

Manager Hansi Flick faces a mounting challenge as Pedri's absence adds to a lengthy list of sidelined players, including Robert Lewandowski, Gavi, Dani Olmo, Raphinha, and goalkeepers Joan Garcia and Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Teenager Lamine Yamal, who recently returned from rehabilitation, is also struggling with a lingering groin issue, while other key players like Frenkie de Jong, Jules Kounde, Alejandro Balde, and Fermin Lopez have faced injury setbacks.

Barcelona have had 15 players unavailable since the campaign began.

Elche, eighth in the standings with 14 points from 10 matches, are coming off a three-match winless streak but remain one of the season's surprise packages. They are two points off the European qualification spots and could capitalise on Barcelona's injury crisis.

Real Madrid, under manager Xabi Alonso, will host struggling Valencia on Saturday. Real have enjoyed an excellent run, winning 12 of their 13 matches across all competitions this season.

However, tensions have arisen following Brazilian winger Vinicius



▲ Manager Hansi Flick

Jr's visible frustration at being substituted during last week's El Clasico. The player issued an apology on Wednesday but notably omitted any mention of Alonso, fuelling speculation about a rift.

Alonso addressed the matter, stating, "These are things we will handle internally."

With a Champions League clash against Liverpool scheduled for Tuesday, Alonso may rotate his squad for the weekend fixture.

Valencia, 18th in LaLiga with nine points, are winless in nearly six weeks and are already in a fight to avoid relegation.

Elsewhere, third-placed Villarreal host Rayo Vallecano, while fourth-placed Atletico Madrid welcome Sevilla to the Metropolitano Stadium. Both teams will look to close the gap on the top two.

(Supersport)

Bublik downs fourth seed Fritz to reach Paris Masters quarters

ALEXANDER Bublik of Kazakhstan downed US fourth seed Taylor Fritz 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 on Thursday to book his spot in the quarterfinals of the Paris Masters.

Lying in wait for the 13th seed in the next round will be either Russian 10th seed Karen Khachanov or sixth seed Alex de Minaur of Australia.

The maverick Bublik has been in fine form in Paris this week and came from behind in the first-set tie-break to seal the opener against the world No 4 Fritz.

Bublik broke the American to move 4-2 ahead in the second set, before again pouncing on Fritz's serve and sealing victory with a winning return.

Defeat for Fritz came a day after he secured his place at the ATP Finals following world No 8 Lorenzo Musetti's second-round exit in the French capital.

Earlier, American fifth seed Ben Shelton beat Russia's Andrey Rublev 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 in the third round and will next face either Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo or former world No 1 Jannik Sinner in the last eight.

The 23-year-old edged a tight opening set against 12th seed Rublev after nearly an hour on court.

The big-serving Toronto Masters champion then secured the first break of the match in the seventh game of the second set to close in on victory.

Shelton engineered several match points in Rublev's next service game, before eventually converting at the third time of asking.

Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime booked his place in the quarterfinals as he came from behind for the third time in as many matches in Paris to beat German Daniel Altmaier 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

The ninth seed is currently one spot outside the last ATP Finals berth, which is occupied by Musetti, who lost Wednesday to fellow Italian Lorenzo Sonego. (Supersport)



▲ Alexander Bublik.

Man Utd must ignore outside noise to go in 'right direction'

MANCHESTER United are heading in the "right direction", according to sporting director Jason Wilcox as the Red Devils look to maintain an upturn in fortunes under Ruben Amorim.

For the first time in the Portuguese's year-long reign, United have won three consecutive Premier League games to surge up to sixth in the table.

Wilcox's appointment last year was one of a number of changes brought about by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe acquiring a minority stake in the English giants.

United finished 15th in the Premier League during Ratcliffe's first full season in charge of football operations and missed out completely on European football for only the second time in 30 years.

However, Wilcox sees positive progress, even if there will be more "bumps in the road" in the club's quest to get back competing to win the Premier League and Champions League.

"We are going in the right direction," Wilcox said in an interview with the club's in-house media.

"We have a clear plan. I am sure there are going to be bumps in the road, but we have just got to make sure we stay calm irrespective of the noise outside."



▲ Jason Wilcox.

After two seasons without Champions League football, a top-four finish to return to Europe's elite competition is imperative both for United's prestige and to comply with financial sustainability regulations.

Ratcliffe has been criticised for making swingeing cuts, including two rounds of redundancies, to balance the club's books.

But United still splashed out £200 million (\$264 million) on a new forward line of

Bryan Mbeumo, Matheus Cunha and Benjamin Sesko in the transfer market.

That investment is beginning to bear fruit as Cunha netted his first goal in Saturday's 4-2 win over Brighton, while Mbeumo has struck three times in the last two games.

"For us to get in the top four and consistently challenge for Champions League places, win Champions Leagues, win Premier Leagues, we have got to invest in the squad,"

added Wilcox.

"We have got to buy the right players. The right players who are talented but also who can deal with the pressure, who can take the squad forward.

"It is not always about just signing elite talent, they have got to have the right character and be somebody who can bring something different to the team."

Mbeumo's fine form does cause one concern for Amorim as he is likely to miss a large chunk of United's busy festive period due to his participation with Cameroon at the Africa Cup of Nations.

Ivory Coast's Amad Diallo could also miss up to six Premier League games, including a derby against Manchester City, during the tournament which runs from December 21 to January 18.

"We are going to struggle a little bit, but we already knew that," said Amorim.

"Other players are going to have the opportunity to help us, they are understanding the way we want to play.

"The change of characteristics are not going to change the idea or the momentum of the team, but let's use Amad and Bryan in these games and then we will see in January."

(Supersport)



Thiba Academy, Dream Achievers crowned RES Siyakha Juniors league champs

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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THIBA Academy and Dream Achievers were crowned champions of the RES Siyakha 1800 Ngomane juniors Leagues after grand closing matches recently played at Ngomane Sports Ground. Thiba Academy won the under-15

category, while Dream Achievers clinched the under-13 league championship. Both Leagues proved to be entertaining as it produced a lot of goals, week in and week out. Thiba Academy showed great enthusiasm and finished the league with 27 points, nine points ahead of their closest rivals. With a goal difference of 51, Thiba Academy proved to be a dominant team, and their young players impressed throughout

the campaign. Meanwhile, Dream Achievers won the under-13 league with 32 points and remained unbeaten. They won 10 games and drew two, scoring 61 goals during the campaign. The RES Siyakha 1800 juniors league is part of the Siyakha Football Programme, which is played in areas in the sugar-belt and surroundings under the auspices of Lubombo Regional Football Association (LRFA).

All is set for Siphocosini Boxing tourney

By Sibusiso Masilela
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TAKING the sport to the people. The Siphocosini Boxing club will host a domestic competition on Saturday (November 1, 2025) at the Siphocosini Sports Ground. The newly assembled side has followed the footsteps of Royal Sugar Eswatini Boxing Club, which recently hosted a competition in Mhlume. Eswatini Boxing Association (EBA) Secretary Nkosinathi Dlamini said preparations for the tournament are at advanced stage. “We are looking forward as a Siphoco City Boxing Club, scheduled for Saturday, November 1, 2025, at Siphocosini Sports Ground. We are excited to see the growth of boxing in the area,” he said. He further encouraged teams to attend the competition in numbers. “We encourage all clubs and boxers to participate in this local tournament to gain experience, stay active, and push themselves to be their best,” he said. The competition will be attended by several local clubs such as Manzini, RES, Correctional, Titans Boxing Club, Zulwini Boxing Club, Manzini Boxing Club, Zebra Force Boxing Club, Stepping Razor Boxing Academy, and Tshaneni, among others. The domestic competition will help the Boxing mother body select boxers for the 2025 International Boxing Association world championships scheduled for December in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). IBA was recently stripped power to regulate the 2026 Commonwealth Games scheduled for Scotland. This means that countries will now have to affiliate with the newly established World Boxing, and the IBA stands to lose close to 20 members in Africa. The process has further stalled the announcement of the Boxing beneficiary for the 2028 Olympic Games, E6 million scholarships recently announced by the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA). IBA also lost its authority to regulate the 2024 Olympic Games boxing competition due to the tension that was sparked by the war between Russia and Ukraine. EOCGA board member Pearl Dlamini is also an executive member for IBA. IBA is funding several initiatives in Africa, such as the Mandela Boxing Cup.



▲ Boxers in action in a recent tournament.

Zwile, Tapelo top scorers' chart

THIBA Academy's duo of Zwile Magagula and Tapelo Dlamini are the top goal scorers in the RES Siyakha 1800 U15 and U13 Leagues, respectively. Zwile scored a total of 28 goals to ensure that he help his club win the championship. He is closely followed by Lindani Mbuyisa of Powerful Heroes with 27 goals, while Dream Achievers' Cebolenkhosi Tsabedze became third with 25 goals under his name. Meanwhile, in the under 13 league, Tapelo topped with 27 goals, while his teammate Siwakhile Malambe came second with 23 goals. In the third place is Dream Achievers' Nkosingiphile Msibi with 22 goals.

- Under 13 league scorer's charts**
1. Tapelo Dlamini (Thiba Academy) - 27 goals
 2. Siwakhile Malambe (Thiba Academy) - 23 goals
 3. Nkosingiphile Msibi (Dream Achievers) - 22 goals
 4. Thato Mayisela (Thiba Academy) - 14 goals
 5. Wakhile Dlamini (Super Strikers) - 14 goals
- Under 15 scorers' chart**
1. Zwile Magagula (Thiba Academy) - 28 goals
 2. Lindani Mbuyisa (Powerful Heroes) - 27 goals
 3. Cebolenkhosi Tsabedze (Dream Achievers) - 25 goals
 4. Siwakhile Malambe (Thiba Academy) - 18 goals
 5. Nhloniphizo Shongwe (Super Strikers)

Rising Stars clinch Mhlume U13 League title

RISING Stars were crowned champions of RES Siyakha 1800 Mhlume under 13 league title, despite losing their two final games of the campaign. Stars finished the league with 19 points, tied with second placed Tigers in what can be termed a tightly contested league race. Tigers were able to beat the eventual champions 1-0 but that was not enough as the latter had a better goal difference. In the under 15 leagues, Professionals were the champions after finishing the campaign with 22 points, while their runners up, Rising Stars, finished at 21 points. Occupying the third spot is Real Stars with 19 points.

- The under-13 league also saw Tigers' Nkosingiphile Simelane topping the goal scorers' chart with nine goals. His closest challenger is Mncobi Ndwandwe of Rising Stars, who scored eight goals. Professional's Siyabonga Simelane came third with five goals. Mhlume U13 League scorers' chart
1. Nkosingiphile Simelane (Tigers) - 9 goals
 2. Mncobi Ndwandwe (Rising Stars) - 8 goals
 3. Siyabonga Simelane (Professionals) - 5 goals
 4. Vuyo Dlamini (Rising Stars) - 4 goals
 5. Bulelwa Dlamini (Real Stars) - 3 goals
 6. Khaya Tsela (Real Stars) - 3 goals



▲ Teams under the Siyakha league.

Premier League matches pre-match press conference

Stories By Chris Dlamini

CAF games give Leopard the edge – ‘Birds’ Caleb

IT’S going down on Sunday at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini between giants Mbabane Swallows and Royal Leopard. This will be matchday four of the MTN Premier League 2024/25 campaign. Leopard is the home team.

However, they did not attend the Premier League of Eswatini’s (PLE) scheduled pre-match press conference on Thursday at Sigwaca House, while the ‘Beautiful Birds’ did.

Representing the latter was head coach Caleb Ngwenya and team Captain Newman Philiso.

“In many ways, Leopard are just way ahead of us. They have played top category A games in CAF, and that has grown their confidence. “We have started afresh with an almost new team while they have maintained their squad and added new players,” said Ngwenya, who won the league title with Swallows three seasons ago.

He was with Moneni Pirates last season but not finished the season without a club before he rejoined Swallows this term. He said that despite Leopard’s clear advantages, he was bringing a team that only needed the

supporters to come and rally behind it.

“These boys can perform with the supporters behind the team. If the supporters can do that, then we could get to the title,” he responded.

Ngwenya had been asked if he could produce his magic and win the league once again with the red and white Tinyoni, as Swallows are also affectionately known.

Newman only appealed to supporters to come and cheer them, and they would give their best to win the match as much as it was not an easy fixture. It must be mentioned that Leopard had been engaged in the second preliminary stage in the past week where they played home and away legs against Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) outfit AS Maniema Union.

They were knocked out in penalties at home on Saturday. In the preliminary stage, Leopard had an easy one against Namibia’s Young African.



Mbabane Swallows fc head coach Caleb Ngwenya and captain Philiso Newman during the pre-match press conference.



Manzini Wanderers captain Mario Janine and Siphamandla Maseko shaking hands.

‘Mpisane’s showboating, jolliness okay’ – Ernest

“HE is a good player and jolly character.”

These were the words of Mbabane Highlanders head coach Ernest Mavuso in the pre-match press conference at Sigwaca House, Mbabane.

This was on Thursday ahead of the Sunday clash with winless hub giants Manzini Wanderers at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini.

“Andile is a good person, jolly, fun and enjoys himself. His showboating and jolly spirit works for us,” said Mavuso.

The soft-spoken coach was asked if it did not trouble him to play the club’s Chairman

Andile Mpisane, especially his showboating.

Meanwhile, Highlanders Captain Siphamandla ‘24 Reasons’ Maseko said they were ready for the task ahead of them on Sunday.

“As the coach put it, we are working to win. Our supporters must just come to the stadium, and we’ll give our best,” he said.

His counterpart Mario Jamine said Highlanders was a big team, and they knew this was going to be a tough match. However, he said they were looking forward to it as they needed to start winning. He asked not to comment about the arrival of new coach Gcina Dlamini.



New Manzini Wanderers coach Gcina Dlamini with his Mbabane Highlanders counterpart Ernest Mavuso.



Mbabane Highlanders AM player Andile Mpisane showboating.

By Chris Dlamini

We can beat ‘Bull’, finish top 8 – Coach Gcina

THREE MTN Premier League games without a win have seen hub giants replace Nyanga ‘Crooks’ Hlophe as the head coach.

A new head coach in the name of Gcina Dlamini has taken over as of Thursday morning.

This is barely four days before meeting third-placed Mbabane Highlanders on Sunday in the league’s matchday four (4) at Mavuso Sports Centre.

Dlamini started drilling the team on Thursday morning and showed up at the pre-match press conference held at Sigwaca House, Mbabane, on the same day.

“I could have started on Monday but was able to do that on Thursday morning. I’m impressed with what I saw as the players’ spirit was okay.

“The mandate for me is to get a top 8 finish, and I think with a personal target of 36 points, position six is possible,” said Dlamini.

On the Highlanders match, Dlamini said they knew each other well with his rival coach Ernest Mavuso.

“We can beat Highlanders and also get the top 8 finish. If we can’t win on Sunday, at least a draw will be fine. I can promise the fans entertaining football as they already know the coaches’ style of play,” said Dlamini.

Meanwhile, Dlamini will still get advice from his predecessor, Hlophe. The latter has been elevated to the Technical Director (TD) position, while Christian Thwala is the



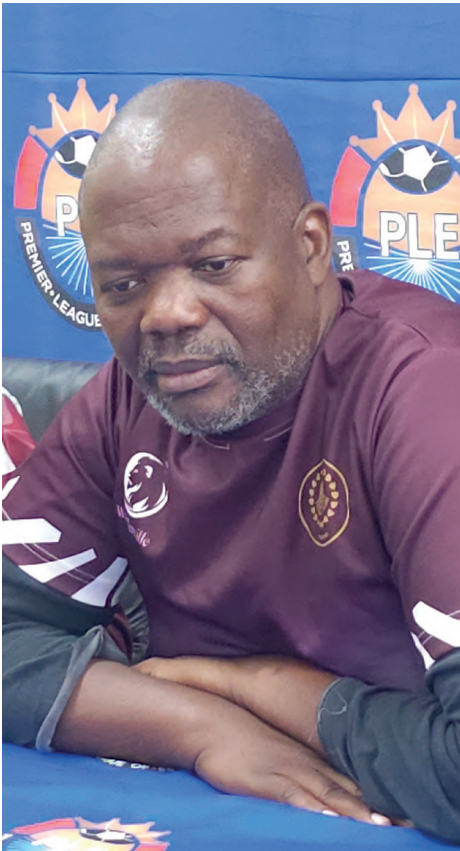
▲ Manzini Wanderers starting XI in one of their past games.

physical trainer. Furthermore, Dlamini joins Wanderers from Ubombo Sugar FC, who he leaves with four points, three behind leaders Malanti Chiefs and three ahead of Wanderers who have one and sit on 15th in the standings. This is after three games apiece.

Dlamini has also coached Manzini Sea Birds and Moneni Pirates before. Meanwhile, Mavuso said they were not at ease due to the opposition’s poor run.

“The Wanderers poor run is giving us sleepless nights. They also have a new coach, but at least we know him and are already preparing towards countering that,” he said.

Mavuso invites fans to come in numbers as a great game of football was on the cards. He said they were going to do their best to keep the winning momentum going after to consecutive wins against Manzini Sea Birds and Amawele.



▲ New Manzini Wanderers coach Gcina Dlamini during his unveiling.

‘Rubber’ application dismissed

By Sibusiso Masilela
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FORMER Mbabane Highlanders Director Bheki ‘Rubber’ Simelane has faced a setback in his legal battle against the club’s Patrons.

Four months after his controversial removal, Simelane’s challenge was brought before the court, only to be dismissed by Judge Titus Mlangeni on Thursday.

The Judge has no grounds in his case, as he was only eligible to be part of the board of governors by virtue of being a director.

The Judge said he was still going to determine the party that will pay the costs.

Simelane accused the Eswatini Football Association and Premier League of Eswatini for unlawfully removing him from office.

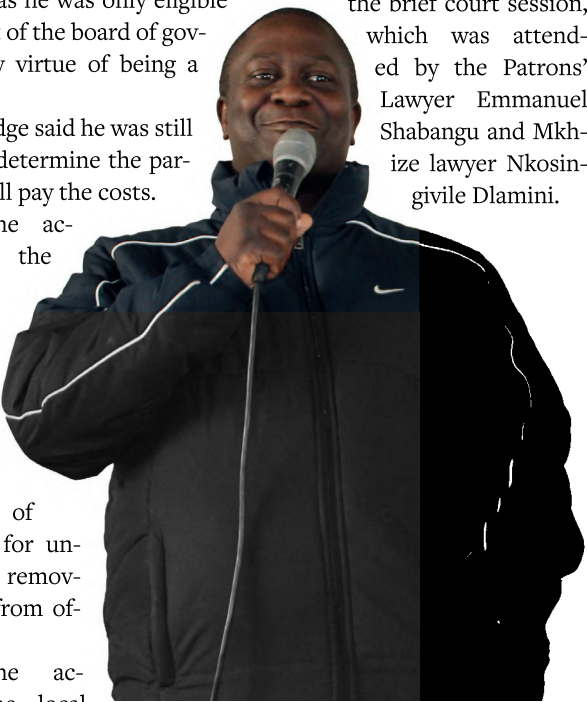
Simelane accused the local football bodies

from removing him from the legal documents of the team.

He further claimed that the two football bodies of not giving him an opportunity to plead his case after the termination of his 18-month contract by the Patrons about three months ago.

This was followed by the appointment of South African Businesswoman Shauwn ‘Mamkhize’ Mkhize as the new president of the capital city giants.

Simelane lawyer Martin ‘Internash’ Dlamini did not attend the brief court session, which was attended by the Patrons’ Lawyer Emmanuel Shabangu and Mkhize lawyer Nkosin-givile Dlamini.



▲ Former Mbabane Highlanders Director Bheki ‘Rubber’ Simelane.

Registration longer under our control – PLE and EFA

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE Premier League of Eswatini and the Eswatini Football Association have both cleared their names on the Mbabane Swallows ownership dispute.

The two parties have both averred that club registration is now done electronically by the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

This is according to affidavits filed by PLE Chairman Polycarp Dlamini and EFA Chief Executive Officer Frederick Mngomezulu before High Court Zonke Magagula.

The two parties have been cited as second and third respondents in the ownership battle for the capital city giants.

Dlamini said the license can only be obtained from CAF via the football mother body.

“Information pertaining to reg-



▲ EFA Chief Executive Officer Frederick Mngomezulu.

istration in compliance with the CAF Licensing requirements can be obtained from the 3rd Respondent as the Licensing entity,” Dlamini prayed.

Mngomezulu also averred that

the registration is now done online.

“In 2022, CAF decided to introduce a fully automated club licensing system for football clubs through the CAF Club Licensing Online Platform (CLOP), where football clubs upload all required licensing documentation remotely into the electronic system to obtain their licenses. The introduction of the fully automated system meant that football clubs no longer had to make physical representations of licensing requirements,” Mngomezulu said.

Swallows Pty faction director Wonder Nhleko is accusing the first respondent, Absalom Ngwenya, of being illegally in office.

Ngwenya is the acting president of the Swallows FC faction.

The matter has been further postponed to November 17, 2025, after Judge Magagula wanted more time to investigate the fresh affidavits submitted by the applicant’s Lawyer John Hlophe.



▲ The Premier League of Eswatini and the Eswatini Football Association have both cleared their names on the Mbabane Swallows ownership dispute.



Saudis turned down Lionel Messi

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'Rubber' application dismissed

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Eswatini Daily News

Sport

MAVUSO SPORTS CENTRE

MANZINI WANDERERS



MBABANE HIGHLANDERS AM

NEW 'SHERIFF' REPLACES NYANGA AT WANDERERS

We can beat 'Bull', finish top 8 - Gcina

... New Manzini Wanderers head coach Gcina Dlamini is upbeat after his first training session with the team on Thursday ahead of Sunday's clash with Highlanders.

P23