



His Majesty unveils model for multibillion Strategic Fuel Reserve

... Eswatini heralding to new era in energy security

By Ncaba Ntshakala

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■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2



Taiwan injects E9.3mln more to empower Eswatini women

... Funding increases to E28 million

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His Majesty unveils model for multibillion Strategic Fuel Reserve

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HIS Majesty King Mswati III has officially unveiled the architectural model for the Phuzamoya Strategic Fuel Reserve Facility, a major infrastructure project that sets out to enhance Eswatini's energy resilience and economic security.

The unveiling ceremony took place at Lozitha Royal Palace and in the presence of Taiwan's Special Envoy and Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr. Lin Chia-Lung.

Standing before dignitaries, diplomats, government officials, and business leaders, the King proclaimed, "It is now my singular honour to unveil the model for the Strategic Oil Reserve." The event, held as part of a wider Taiwan-Eswatini Business seminar, marked a significant moment in the bilateral relationship between the two nations.

His Majesty praised Taiwan for its ongoing support across critical development sectors, including agriculture, health, education, and rural electrification.

"We also like to take this opportunity to thank Taiwan for the support we have received that spans across different sectors," he said.

"These include agriculture and health mission, education, rural electrification, and the opening of the job market for Emaswati to work in Taiwan."

The Phuzamoya Fuel Reserve project is designed to provide long-term security



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III and Taiwan's Special Envoy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Lin Chia-Lung sharing a moment after unveiling the model for the soon to be constructed Phuzamoya Strategic Fuel Reserve Facility.

against energy disruptions and rising fuel prices. However, His Majesty acknowledged that the project must still undergo due process. "As we unveil the project, we are cognizant of due processes that still need to

be followed before it can get off the ground," he stated, referencing the necessary approval of a proposed loan bill by Parliament.

The King noted that this would not be the first collaboration of its kind between the

two nations. "This would not be the first big project between the two countries, as others include the Biotech Park, the hospitality industry, and others. We look forward to many more," he said with optimism.

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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HIS Majesty King Mswati III reaffirmed his commitment to economic growth and transformation during the unveiling of the Phuzamoya Strategic Fuel Reserve Facility model.

In his address, His Majesty emphasized the importance of economic collaboration, particularly in creating job opportunities for emaswati and stimulating industrial growth.

"This seminar comes at a time that the country has initiated transformation programmes to grow the economy and uplift the social well-being of its people," he declared.

He urged both local and Taiwanese businesspeople to take advantage of the investment opportunities available in Eswatini, noting the government's readiness to support those eager to establish operations within the Kingdom.

Eswatini, under King Mswati III's stewardship, has made significant strides in welcoming foreign investment. "Now that they have learnt about the government structures, we urge them to take advantage of the investment opportunities through the Ministries of Commerce and Natural Resources," the King said. He described the fuel reserve facility as one of several transformative initiatives designed to position

the country for sustainable development and energy independence.

The King also highlighted Taiwan's remarkable achievements in sectors like semiconductors and manufacturing, stating, "There are many opportunities that can be derived from our partnerships as we are aware that Taiwan is one of the leading producers of semiconductors and other industries." He expressed hope that new partnerships formed during the business seminar would yield increased trade and cultural exchange between the two nations.

Moreover, highlighting his support for Taiwan on the global stage, His Majesty made a strong statement on international inclusion. "We also wish to reiterate our stand with Taiwan in gaining recognition as a member of the United Nations and related agencies to participate and contribute meaningfully in the development of mankind as we leave no one behind," he affirmed.

His Majesty concluded with a warm message to the Taiwanese delegation. "We wish you a very happy stay. We trust that before we conclude today's business session, there will be many more new projects that will be unveiled," he said.

King champions economic transformation with Taiwan partnership



▲ The architectural model of the soon to be constructed Phuzamoya Strategic Fuel Reserve Facility.

Taiwan injects E9.3mln more to empower Eswatini women



▲ Taiwan Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Lin Chia-Lung handing over the E9.3 million cheque to Her Majesty the Indlovukazi towards the Women Business Start-Up Micro Finance Revolving Fund at Ludzizini Royal Residence.



▲ Taiwan Ambassador to Eswatini Jeremy H.S Liang handing over a gift to Her Majesty the Indlovukazi.

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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TAIWAN'S Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Lin Chia-lung, has announced a fresh \$500,000 (approximately E9.3 million) injection into Eswatini's Women's Micro-Financing Revolving Fund, which was hailed as it fortifies his country's commitment to women and youth empowerment in the Kingdom.

Dr Lin made such a major announcement as he was speaking during the Taiwan ICDF Achievement Presentation of the Women's Micro-Financing Revolving Fund held at Sibane Sami.

He expressed deep admiration for the resilience of Eswatini's rural women and their ability to transform micro-loans into powerful tools for development.

"Today, I am happy to announce that Taiwan will inject another \$500,000 into the fund," said Dr Lin. "This investment will extend the outreach of the program and once again demonstrates that Taiwan and Eswatini are committed to economic empowerment and sustainable development."

Dr Lin, who is in the country for a five-day working visit and will attend His Majesty King Mswati III's 57th birthday celebrations on Friday, praised the initiative for its visible impact on communities.

"Through micro-loans and training, the program has helped women achieve economic independence," he said, noting the long-term benefits for both households and national economic growth.

In a touching moment during his speech, the Minister shared the story of Nomfundo Mabuza, a rural entrepreneur who expanded her mustard and vegetable garden through the fund.

"She not only improved the living standards of her own family, but also hired other women to work for her, creating more jobs," he said. Mabuza was so grateful that she named her newborn baby "Taiwan."

"What moved me even more was that she named her newborn baby Taiwan, to thank Taiwan for helping her expand her business," Dr Lin told the audience, adding that Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be purchasing some of her products for promotion in Taiwan.

The Revolving Fund, established with a \$1 million investment from Taiwan in 2023, has focused on women and youth in rural areas, enabling them to start businesses and build livelihoods. "The story illustrates the importance of women's empowerment," said Dr Lin. "We hope that when women are given opportunities, they not only improve

their own lives, but they also help their families, strengthen their communities, and make a positive contribution to the whole country."

He thanked Eswatini's government, particularly Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla and Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo, for their support of the fund. "Our partnership allows Taiwan to contribute to Eswatini," he said, stressing the strong ties between the two countries. "The partnership between Taiwan and Eswatini is based on trust, cooperation, and mutual prosperity. Indeed, we are a family."

The ceremony was also attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, beneficiaries, government officials, and the Taiwan Technical Mission.

DPM hails fund, celebrates Taiwan-Eswatini continued relationship

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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DEPUTY Prime Minister Senator Thulisile Dladla hailed the initiative as a "transformative force" that is reshaping the lives of women in Eswatini.

Speaking in the presence of Taiwan's visiting Special Envoy, Foreign Minister Dr. Lin Chia-lung, Dladla emphasized the profound and far-reaching impact the fund has had since its inception.

"It is with great humility and heartfelt gratitude that I stand before you today, on behalf of the people of the Kingdom of Eswatini, and especially the resilient women whose lives have been transformed by a remarkable initiative," she said, referring to the Women's Enterprise Revolving Fund, which she credited with opening doors long shut due to financial exclusion and economic marginalization.

The fund, a generous contribution of US\$1 million (approximately E18 million) from the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan), was originally presented by President Tsai Ing-wen to Her Majesty the Queen Mother. It was designed to empower women in Eswatini, particularly in rural



▲ Taiwan Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Lin Chia-Lung sharing a moment with DPM Thulisile Dladla and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu during the event.

constituencies, through access to micro-financing that enables entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihood development.

"The Women's Revolving Fund has become a beacon of hope and a symbol of progress," the Deputy Prime Minister declared, highlighting how it has enabled women to start or expand small businesses, improve household incomes, and secure better futures for their families. "By enabling women to start and expand small businesses, support their families, and invest in their futures, this fund has contributed directly to our national goals of poverty alleviation and inclusive development."

The initiative also aligns with global development goals, contributing notably to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—specifically Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Dladla pointed to tangible improvements brought about by the fund, including higher rural incomes, improved nutrition for families, increased financial literacy, and greater gender equity. "Women who once struggled to make ends meet are now proud business owners," she said. "Mothers who could not afford to send their children to

school are now providing education and opportunities for the next generation."

She also praised the Taiwan Embassy's oversight of the fund's implementation, calling their management "a true reflection of responsible leadership" that has built public trust. "Your commitment to ensuring that the fund is properly managed and effectively utilized is a true reflection of responsible leadership," Dladla noted, adding that transparency and accountability have been key to the fund's success.

Addressing the beneficiaries directly, the Deputy Prime Minister called the women of Eswatini "the true heroes" of this initiative, recognizing their courage and determination to seize the opportunity and transform their circumstances. "To the women of Eswatini who have embraced this opportunity with courage and determination, you are the true heroes," she said, her voice rich with emotion and pride.

She concluded her remarks by emphasizing Eswatini's diplomatic and developmental ties with Taiwan, expressing optimism about the future of the partnership. "We look forward to continuing this journey of shared growth and prosperity," she said, extending additional gratitude to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade for their ongoing support.

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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Shiselweni ready to welcome emaSwati to celebrate King's Birthday

● Prime Minister visits King Sobhuza Stadium, lauds vast progress

THE southern region of Shiselweni is filled with anticipation and pride as it prepares to host the nation's most anticipated royal celebration, the 57th birthday of His Majesty King Mswati III.

The festivities, which will take place this Friday at King Sobhuza II Stadium, are set to welcome dignitaries, emaSwati, and guests from across the globe.

Recently, Prime Minister Russell Dlamini visited the stadium to witness the final rehearsals of the commemoration. The Prime Minister lauded the organizers and participants for their dedication and expressed his confidence in the region's readiness. He stated that the preparations are truly impressive, and he is proud of the level of commitment shown. Dlamini further extended warm wishes to His Majesty and the entire nation for a joyful and successful celebration.

His Majesty King Mswati III, who ascended the throne on April 25, 1986, at the tender age of 18, has become a pillar of stability, vision, and cultural pride for Eswatini. His reign, now spanning nearly four decades, has been marked by a steady commitment to national development, peace, and the preservation of Swati traditions. The King has consistently promoted the importance of education as the cornerstone of development, with his government expanding access to education through various programs including the Free Primary Education initiative and the strengthening of tertiary institutions.

Under His Majesty's leadership, Eswatini



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini flanked by Minister of Home Affairs HRH Princess Lindiwe and other officials during the rehearsals.

has made notable strides in diversifying its economy.

Attract

From agriculture and manufacturing to ICT and tourism, the country continues to attract investment and promote innovation, guided by the King's call for economic resilience

and self-sufficiency. His encouragement of home-grown solutions has inspired a new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators, particularly in rural areas where community-based projects are flourishing.

His Majesty has also been a vocal advocate for the empowerment of women,

championing initiatives aimed at enhancing the socio-economic roles of women across all sectors.

Through targeted programs and royal patronage, Eswatini has seen an increase in female participation in leadership roles, education, and entrepreneurship.



▲ EmaSwati and officials following proceedings during the rehearsals.



▲ Members of Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force brass band rehearsing.

Eswatini strengthens global ties as PM welcomes new OACPS Secretary-General

By Ncaba Ntshakala
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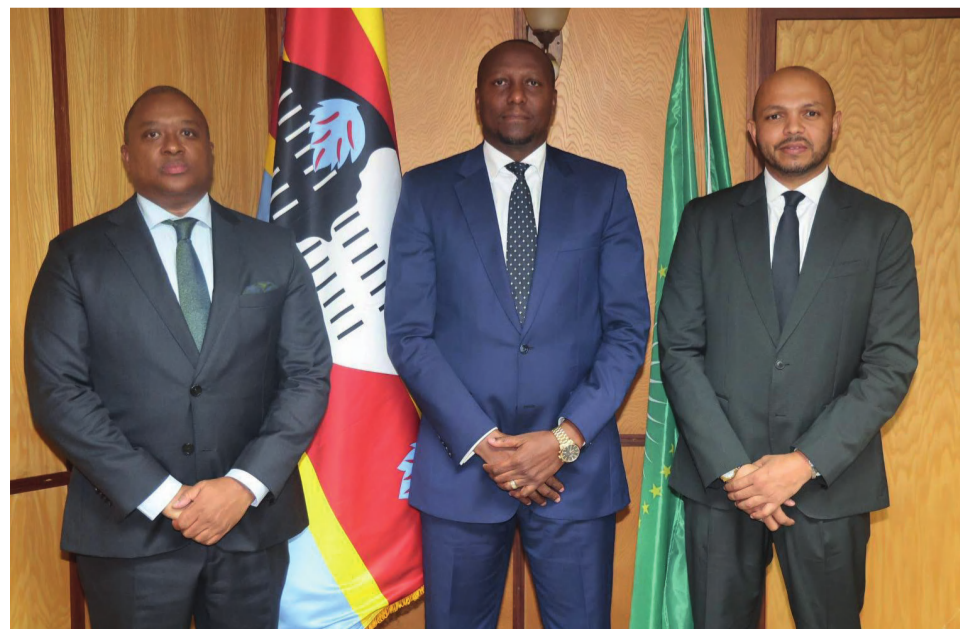
PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini has formally welcomed the newly appointed Secretary-General of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), His Excellency Moussa Saleh-Batraki, at the Private and Cabinet Office in Mbabane.

The high-level meeting, focused on critical challenges facing the OACPS bloc and examined Secretary-General Batraki's pivotal role in shaping and steering the organisation's reform agenda. The Kingdom of Eswatini reaffirmed its unwavering support to the OACPS, pledging to actively contribute toward the organisation's strategic goals. Secretary-General Batraki is a seasoned diplomat with extensive experience in international governance, has assumed leadership at a time when global geopolitical shifts demand a reinvigorated

and unified OACPS. His visit to Eswatini forms part of a major engagement strategy aimed at strengthening ties with member states and deepening collaboration across continents.

Eswatini continues to play a prominent role within the OACPS, holding two of the most influential leadership positions in the organisation. Her Excellency Pholile Shakantu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, currently presides as President of the OACPS Council of Ministers which is a crucial body that directs policy and strengthens international partnerships. Meanwhile, His Excellency Sibusisiwe Mngomezulu, Eswatini's Ambassador to Belgium, serves as Chair of the Committee of Ambassadors, the diplomatic engine of the organisation based in Brussels.

The OACPS, made up of 79 member states from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, is tasked with promoting sustainable development, economic cooperation, and collective action on the international stage.



▲ From L-R; Ambassador Sibusisiwe Mngomezulu, Prime Minister Russell Dlamini and Secretary-General of the OACPS, H.E. Moussa Saleh-Batraki, at the Private and Cabinet Office.

Fierce debate as Parly passes 0.5% VAT hike

By Kwanele Dhladhla

THE 0.5 percentage hike in Value Added Tax (VAT) over two years, forecasted to generate an additional E370 million to the country's revenue, has been approved by the House of Assembly after a fierce debate where MPs expressed a strong sense of objection, but later relented to the increase.

The Ministry of Finance House of Assembly Portfolio Committee Member of Parliament (MP) Chairperson, Marwick Khumalo, submitted that the August House should consider passing the VAT Rates Regulations (VAT) of 2025.

The increase intends to align with South Africa after Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana confirmed that South Africa's VAT would increase by 0.5 percentage points from 1 May 2025, with a second 0.5 percentage point increase in 2026.

Khumalo said not passing the VAT increase could have dire economic effects for the country, especially when considering that the country remains signatory to the Common Monetary Area (CMA) and Southern African Customs Union (SACU). He promised that Emaswati would be cushioned from the VAT through a new schedule of VAT-exempt goods that would be issued by Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg soon.

"As a country, we should remember that we are pegged to the Rand by choice. Not increasing VAT will confuse, especially from a trade point of view, since South Africa remains the country's major trading partner," Khumalo explained.

Zombodze Emuva MP, Ntando Mkhonta, said following the spike in prices, he was strongly of the view that VAT should not be increased in Eswatini. He submitted that it would be difficult to reverse the VAT increase once it has been approved by Parliament. However, Khumalo explained that when a law has been enacted, the minister has a

... country to generate E370mln revenue from increase, new schedule of VAT exempt goods to cushion Emaswati coming soon



▲ Hhukwini MP Alec Lushaba shares a light moment with Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Prince Simelane after the VAT debate.

preserve to set a date when it should come into effect. Therefore, Eswatini would use the same provision in the case it does not eventually get increased in South Africa.

MP Princess Nkosingumenzi urged Parliament to support the finance committee by passing the increase.

"This is beyond our control since we are pegged to the Rand. We might have challenges if we do not approve the hike if the region decides that it should go ahead," the Princess said.

Lugongolweni MP, Joseph Souza, sought assurance whether bread and milk would be included in the list of VAT exempted goods.

The Mbabane East MP, Welcome Dlamini, asked whether the finance committee had inquired from the ministry when the time would come for Eswatini to be independent.

"The time has come for Eswatini not to catch a cold when South Africa sneezes. In the future, we must devise a plan working with our economists because we might have a challenge if SA, for instance, hikes VAT by 20 percent with our struggling economy. The SA courts have said the judgment will be issued by April 29, 2025; can't we wait for the judgment?"

Gege MP Magesi Dlamini highlighted that the electorate already suffers due to the price increases in water, electricity, and now VAT.

"The people are complaining that we are not considering their financial troubles. Let us wait for the SA court to make a ruling on the matter before it gets passed by Parliament," the MP submitted.

The Manzini Regional MP, Thandeka Mavuso, expressed concern that the VAT

increase could have a strong effect on businesses.

"Have we considered the struggling Emaswati? I am strongly opposed to the VAT hike," she emphasised.

Ndzingeni MP, Gcina Magagula, said, "Let us consider the people who voted us into Parliament in the case of VAT. Can't we find other means of raising the money to be added to revenue by the VAT increase?"

The Phondo MP, Bonginkhosi Dube, said he was at pains to debate a proposed increase without having been given sufficient time to consult the electorate.

"I do not support the increase on the basis that I have not applied myself. Other countries are still in court on the same issue, yet we are already in the process of passing it. Let us not pass the VAT increase," he pleaded with MPs. The Mahlangatsha MP, Mgucisi Dlamini, said that when South Africa raises salaries for civil servants, Eswatini does not follow suit but when it comes to VAT, the country should do so immediately.

"I am opposed to the VAT hike because it will cripple the already struggling Emaswati. The VAT hike will also lead to a surge in smuggling of goods at the border," he warned. The Manzini North MP, Sifiso Nhlengetfwa, advised that, "even though we may be in a hurry to align with SA, the electorate must be given an opportunity to also make an input. We passed water, electricity and now VAT in less than a year, the electorate will be up in arms at the Tinkhundla Centres. SA has a different political system, and Eswatini has its unique system."

The Mayiwane MP, Sicelo Khungankhosi Dlamini, added, "We must desist from saying the VAT increase is out of control. All the time in Eswatini, we must tell the electorate bad news. When we say increase salaries, the response we get is that there is not enough money. We have increased water, electricity, and now VAT, what about the salaries being paid to Emaswati?"

Cops investigate murder of 9-year-old girl

By Thokozani Mazibuko

POLICE are investigating the murder of a 9-year-old girl found in a dam in Pigg's Peak. Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the Chief Police Information and Communication Officer, confirmed the tragic discovery made on April 22, 2025.

According to Vilakati, the young victim, a resident of Nyakatfo, was discovered floating in the dam shortly after 10:00am. Authorities were alerted upon the discovery, prompting an immediate investigation into the circumstances surrounding her death. Strangulation marks were noted on the victim's neck, suggesting foul play.

"This is a very serious case, and our investigators are working diligently to uncover the truth," said Superintendent Vilakati during a press briefing. "We urge anyone with information regarding this incident to come forward and assist us in our investigation."

It is worth mentioning that as investigators continue to probe the case, they are meticulously gathering evidence and interviewing potential witnesses. The police have also appealed to the public for any information that may lead to identifying those responsible for this heinous act.



▲ Chief Police Information and Communication Officer Phindile Vilakati.

It should be noted that the death of the young girl has raised concerns about child safety in the region, prompting discussions on community awareness and protective measures for children.

The investigation is ongoing, and remain committed in ensuring justice for the victim and her grieving family.

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Stories by Delisa Magagula

A family feud of over E750,000 in compensation money has ended in a landmark High Court ruling which confirms that the funds belong to all children of the late Abednego Dlodlu and not solely to the heirs of his son, the late Vusi Stanley Dlodlu.

The judgment, handed down by Judge Maseko, comes after months of legal wrangling sparked by urgent court proceedings launched by Thandi Matola, the sister of the deceased. Matola sought an order to freeze the funds and stop their distribution by the Master of the High Court and Vusi's daughter, Nomfundo Dlodlu.

At the centre of the dispute is a piece of Swazi Nation Land which was allocated to a private developer, Muzi Dlamini of MA Dlamini Consulting Engineers, through traditional structures. Dlamini paid a total of E750,000 in compensation, E375,000 to Vusi's Eswatini Bank account and the remaining E375,000 to Themba Dlodlu's FNB account. Both are sons of the late Abednego Dlodlu.

Court documents reveal that the Dlodlu family allocated the land to Dlamini using Siswati Law and Custom to allow him to build a filling station. The court found that Vusi and Themba, who led the negotiations on behalf of their siblings, failed to inform the rest of the family about the payments they received.

This concealment was discovered by Matola, who then urgently approached the court to stop the funds from being distributed as part of Vusi's estate. An interim interdict was granted, freezing both the FNB and Eswatini Bank accounts.

The Master of the High Court, however, proceeded to rule that the funds belonged to Vusi's estate, a decision that would have seen Nomfundo and her siblings inherit the money. That ruling has now been reviewed and set aside by the court.

The judgment heavily relied on a police report compiled by Detective Sergeant Steven Mlambo of the Financial and Economic Crimes Investigation Unit in the Lubombo Region. Mlambo's investigation confirmed that the funds originated from

High Court ruling over a family feud:

'Compensation funds must be shared among Dlodlu siblings'

● Judge overturns Master's decision, blasts concealment by family members



▲ The High Court of Eswatini.

Dlamini's company and were intended as compensation to the entire family, not just to Vusi.

"The source of the funds is now beyond doubt," the Judge ruled. "The funds do not belong to the deceased Vusi alone, and the Master has misdirected herself in concluding otherwise."

Dismissed

The court took particular issue with Themba's conduct, who admitted to using the money in his account despite the existing court order freezing it. He claimed that the FNB account "unfroze itself," a justification the court dismissed as implausible.

"Themba is a sophisticated individual. He knew the account had been frozen, yet he continued to spend the funds. This is a clear contempt of court," said Judge Maseko.

The Judge found that had the two brothers disclosed the payments at the time, the funds could have been fairly divided among the siblings, and the matter would never have reached court. Instead,

their actions sowed confusion, misled the Master, and pitted the deceased's daughter against her uncles and aunts.

Judge Maseko was also critical of the Master's role, noting that a simple investigation could have revealed the true source of the funds. "The Master had every opportunity to approach the bank, or even Mr. Dlamini himself, to clarify the origin of the money," he said. "Instead, the Master proceeded to treat the funds as part of the estate without due diligence."

Custody

The Judge warned that failure to verify the source of estate funds can result in improper distribution and even potential money laundering. He emphasized that such oversight is unacceptable, especially when an estate is being administered under the watch of the court.

In the end, the court confirmed the Rule Nisi issued on May 31, 2024, as a final order. The Master's ruling dated May 16, 2024, was reviewed and set aside. The funds are

to remain under the Master's custody but must now be distributed fairly among all the Dlodlu siblings, including the estate of the late Vusi. Costs were awarded against Nomfundo Dlodlu (1st Respondent), Themba Dlodlu (2nd Respondent), and the Master of the High Court (3rd Respondent) on the ordinary scale, with one paying and the others absolved.

"The Applicant and her siblings have succeeded in protecting their rights. The Constitution of Eswatini and the common law are clear in safeguarding the right to property and fair inheritance," the court concluded.

The court further noted that the case serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of transparency in family dealings, especially where traditional land allocations intersect with formal legal processes. It also highlighted the need for the Master of the High Court to conduct thorough investigations before ruling on the distribution of estate funds.

Land dispute takes legal turn as...

Man runs to court to save only source of income

A father of four has turned to the courts in a desperate bid to stop an eviction that threatens to take away his only source of income and leave his family in financial ruin.

Alex Khoza, a small business owner from Mathangeni in the Kwaluseni area, says he may soon lose the hair salon he built with his own hands at Logoba after a family dispute took a legal turn. Now, with an eviction order looming, Khoza is pleading with the court to protect his rights and allow him to keep the business that feeds and educates his children.

The dispute traces back to 2014, when Khoza was granted permission by Nikiwe Agnes Dlamini, the former landowner, to build a hair salon at the Dlamini family homestead in Logoba. He says he consulted with the family, including Lomagugu Simelane, the current second respondent in the case, and it was agreed he would pay a symbolic monthly rent of E150 since he was funding and building the structure himself.

"I used my own money, my own hands. The agreement was that I stay as long as I need and pay a minimal rent," Khoza said in his affidavit.

Things changed in 2016, after the passing of the landowner. Rent payments were redirected to the Master of the High Court, and later to the landowner's eldest son, Msindazwe Dlamini.

In October 2021, Msindazwe raised the rent to E800, a move Khoza could not afford. He negotiated and agreed to pay E500 and later pushed for a reduction to E300 in early 2022. When Msindazwe rejected the new amount in March 2022, a 33-month standoff began.

Despite tensions, a verbal agreement was reportedly reached in November 2024, where Khoza agreed to settle E9,900 in rent arrears and pay a one-off E300,000 for continued stay on the land. He made an initial payment of E1,000. But soon after, he was shocked to receive a summons, this time from Lomagugu Simelane, claiming arrears and demanding eviction.

On March 20, 2025, a default judgment was granted against Khoza after he misread the court date, believing he was due in court on the 25th. When he finally appeared before the Small Claims Court, the previous ruling was rescinded, and he was allowed to tell his side of the story.

He says the court, led by the first respondent (a commissioner), requested a quotation for compensation, a sign that the court acknowledged his rights as the one who built the structure. Even the second respondent reportedly agreed to compensate him if he vacated.

But on April 3, 2025, the matter was suddenly recalled, a week earlier than expected, and the court issued a ruling for his eviction by April 25, without discussing compensation.

Crying foul

Khoza is now crying foul. He says the court committed a gross irregularity by issuing an eviction order without allowing him to be heard, and by failing to consider his compensation claim before ruling.

"The court even recorded that I had agreed to abandon my compensation claim," he said. "That is not true. Why would I abandon a claim of E80,000 for a disputed debt of just E9,500?"

He is now seeking an urgent interdict to stop the eviction, calling it unjust and damaging.

At the heart of Khoza's legal fight is more than just a building; it's his entire



▲ With an eviction order looming, Khoza is pleading with the court to protect his rights and allow him to keep the business (hair salon) that feeds and educates his children.

livelihood.

"I have a wife and four children. My wife is unemployed. My children go to school in Manzini and Lobamba. If I'm kicked out, I lose my income. We'll be thrown out of our rented flat. My children may be forced to drop out of school," he said.

With just days to go before the eviction order takes effect, Khoza says the courts are his last hope. "I'm not asking for favours. I'm asking for fairness. For a chance to be heard. And for justice for a man who worked hard to build something from nothing."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

EITF unveils new logo and opens applications for exhibitors

THE Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) has undergone a major visual transformation, launching a new logo and corporate identity (CI) on Wednesday morning, during an online event aimed at exhibitors and potential visitors. The launch was led by the EITF's official spokesperson, Siphesihle Nkhabindze, who described the rebrand as a critical step in aligning the Fair's image with the essence of Eswatini's heritage and international aspirations.

Stocks, dollar rebound after Trump backtracks on remarks over Fed

SYDNEY/LONDON — European stocks rebounded on Wednesday, as investors drew some relief from U.S. President Donald Trump saying he had no plans to fire the head of the Federal Reserve, and hinting at lower tariffs for China. The dollar initially leapt after Trump walked back his threats to dismiss Fed Chair Jerome Powell, which had shaken investor confidence in U.S. assets, although most of those gains had faded as trading began in Europe.

South African rand weaker after drop in inflation

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand was weaker on Wednesday after data showed local inflation fell to a five-year low in March. At 1416 GMT, the rand traded at 18.6375 against the dollar, about 0.2 per cent weaker than Tuesday's close. Trade in the rand has been highly volatile for weeks as financial markets have grappled with rifts in the ruling coalition over the national budget and uncertainty over U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff plans.

Taiwanese delegation urged to invest in Eswatini's key sectors

... Minister describes visit as turning point in bilateral investment relations

By Delisa Magagula

IN a spirited call to action, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo has encouraged Taiwanese businesses to take advantage of Eswatini's expanding industrial landscape, citing new opportunities in automotive manufacturing, ICT, and agro-processing.

Welcoming a high-powered Taiwanese business delegation to the Kingdom, the Minister said the event marked a remarkable milestone in Eswatini's journey toward becoming a competitive investment destination.

"It is an absolute honour for me and my team to have worked collaboratively with the Taiwan Embassy in Eswatini to host this remarkable event," Minister Khumalo said during his official remarks.

He further said, they have pursued this engagement for years, and it is gratifying to see tangible results.

Khumalo highlighted Papertech, a Taiwanese company that has begun setting up operations in the industrial hub of Matsapha, as a symbol of progress.

He further said, the company is in advanced stages of establishment and is expected to bolster Eswatini's industrial diversification.

"This is exactly the kind of partnership we have been working toward. We are now seeing diversification into new sectors, and Papertech is a shining example of that vision." He said.

The Minister added that Eswatini is committed to offering a well-coordinated approach to all foreign investors and that these levels of facilitation will only improve with



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo.

upcoming government initiatives.

In a bid to simplify the investment process, the Ministry announced the imminent launch of a One Stop Service Facility in May 2025.

According to Minister Khumalo, the facility will provide a seamless, coordinated entry point for investors seeking to do business in Eswatini.

"We are creating a structure that ensures that from the moment you land, you know exactly where to go, who to speak to, and how to proceed," he explained.

"Time is money, and we intend not to waste either." Said Khumalo.

The Minister in addition said he was overwhelmed by the interest from Taiwan's private sector.

Worth mentioning is that, the delegation features companies involved in:

1. Renewable energy
2. ICT and multimedia
3. Transportation and engineering

4. Construction and telecommunications
5. Retail and electric bus manufacturing
6. Automotive parts and turnkey solutions

"We are not talking about one or two industries here. This is wide-spectrum interest, which tells us one thing they see potential here." He said.

The Minister noted that the visit came at a strategically opportune moment. As global economies reel from the impact of trade tariffs particularly those imposed by the United States

He mentioned that, Eswatini remains competitively positioned with a base tariff rate of 10%.

He emphasized Eswatini's access to regional markets through SACU and COMESA and pointed out the success of the Economic Cooperation Agreement (ECA) with Taiwan.

"Just recently, the first container of beef from Eswatini was sold in Taiwan and it was gone in less than a week," he said.

Eyeing the automotive value chain

MINISTER of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo invited Taiwanese companies to consider Eswatini as a base for automotive component manufacturing.

He said that, as a member of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), Eswatini is ideally positioned to plug into the broader regional value chain.

"We need to host one or several components of the automotive industry. We have the labour, the land, and the logistical reach it's just a matter of putting the pieces together." he stated.

He also outlined other sectors of strategic interest, including ICT product assembly, cable manufacturing, confectionery, and e-commerce solutions.

The Minister highlighted Eswatini's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) as a major draw for investors. With competitive incentives and a streamlined regulatory framework, the SEZ policy, he said, was designed to attract sustainable foreign investment.

"We've opened our hands to companies willing to grow with us. Our SEZ incentives are not just attractive they're transformative." he noted.

Minister Khumalo expressed gratitude to the Government of Taiwan and the delegation for continued support in multiple trade and policy initiatives, including:

1. The development of Eswatini's e-commerce framework
2. Strategic input into the Special Economic Zones policy
3. Participation in global trade exhibitions through TAITRA, such as the recently concluded Design Giftionary 2025 Trade Show.

"This is more than diplomacy it's true partnership. You have walked with us every step of the way." He said.

Minister Khumalo said he looked forward to productive engagements throughout the week and urged the Taiwanese delegation to explore the full range of opportunities available in Eswatini.

"The Kingdom is rich in opportunity. Let's move forward, together, and build enterprises



▲ Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade PS Melusi Masuku.

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.1419	18.6150
G.B. Pound	24.4325	24.8165
EURO	20.7149	21.3236
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	

EITF unveils new logo and opens applications for exhibitors

By Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) has undergone a major visual transformation, launching a new logo and corporate identity (CI) on Wednesday morning, during an online event aimed at exhibitors and potential visitors.

The launch was led by the EITF's official spokesperson, Siphesihle Nkhabindze, who described the rebrand as a critical step in aligning the Fair's image with the essence of Eswatini's heritage and international aspirations.

"The old logo, while familiar, no longer captured the full spirit of who we are," Nkhabindze explained during the virtual reveal.

He said the old logo lacked uniqueness. It existed as just a logo, without a story that truly belonged to them he further said in a global arena where every brand competes for attention, their identity must speak for them.

He said the new design was a deliberate effort to create a visual identity that is instantly recognizable as Eswatini's own.

"We needed a mark that is recognizably Eswatini. A design that roots us in heritage while projecting our potential to the world," he added.

According to Nkhabindze, the primary inspiration behind the logo was the iconic entrance structure of the Trade Fair, popularly referred to as 'guca sithandaze' an archway that many Swatis associate with unity, culture, and welcome.

"That arch became the heart of our new identity. We saw in its architecture a structure that tells a story of tradition, unity, and welcome," he said.

The logo design also incorporates colours from the national flag each one chosen for its symbolism.

"We brought in some colours of our national flag, each one chosen not just for beauty, but for meaning," Nkhabindze stated.

He explained that blue stands for peace and stability, white for unity, and red for history and resilience. These shades are meant to reflect both the nation's cultural fabric and the evolving spirit of the event.

He said the acronym 'EITF' was positioned at the top of the logo as a bold anchor, balancing a global outlook with national pride. At the top, the acronym EITF stands boldly, anchoring them globally while connecting back to home.

The logo also features two abstract human figures with raised arms. Nkhabindze said these figures symbolize the people the performers, the exhibitors, and the dreamers who bring the Trade Fair to life.

"They embody the energy of performers, exhibitors, and dreamers. The ones who make this fair not just an event, but a celebration," he said.

In addition to the unveiling of the new logo, Nkhabindze also officially announced the opening of applications for exhibitors wishing to participate in the 2025 edition of the EITF.



▲ The new Eswatini International Trade Fair logo.

Applications opened at 3 p.m. on 23 April and, as per standard procedure, will be managed entirely through the EITF mobile application.

"All exhibitor applications will be processed on the EITF App," he said. The app can be downloaded on the Google Play Store as well as through our dedicated link. The link to download the app is: bit.ly/eitfweb.

Nkhabindze advised those who already have the app installed to ensure it is updated.

"This will assist in ensuring that all applications from the App are processed correctly and carry the correct information," he said.

For further guidance on the application process, the EITF team encouraged users to visit the event's official social media pages on Facebook and Instagram. Alternatively, questions or technical issues can be addressed via WhatsApp using the number 7950 0050.

"We are excited to announce the launch of EITF exhibitor applications as well as this new visual identity," Nkhabindze said in his concluding remarks.

"Through this, we aim to elevate our global competitiveness, ensure versatility across media and moments, creating an identity that speaks to a balance between innovation and tradition."

He emphasized that the goal of the rebrand was not just about aesthetics, but about positioning Eswatini and its Trade Fair as a serious player in the global business and trade landscape.

"We want people to know that we are not only a host of the EITF but that we are a hub for innovation, business, and culture," he said.

Worth noting is that the Eswatini International Trade Fair is one of the country's most prestigious business events,



▲ EITF spokesperson Siphesihle Nkhabindze.

bringing together local and international exhibitors, entrepreneurs, government institutions, and thousands of visitors annually.

With this rebrand, the EITF hopes to reinvigorate interest in the event and attract a wider, more diverse audience both locally and internationally.

According to analysts, the visual rebrand could not have come at a better time. With regional competition for trade and exhibition platforms on the rise, Eswatini's move to modernize its image while maintaining cultural relevance is being seen as a proactive step toward future proofing the Fair.

Marketing and branding experts in the region echoed similar sentiments on social media following the launch, with several noting the logo's clean design and symbolic depth.

One local designer commented, "This is the kind of corporate identity that doesn't

just show up on a billboard. It tells a story. And that's powerful."

As the countdown to this year's Trade Fair begins, the new logo serves not only as a visual refresh but as a strategic pivot. For the EITF, it marks the beginning of a new chapter one that blends legacy with innovation, cultural pride with international relevance.

Nkhabindze said the EITF team was confident that the new logo would resonate deeply with the Swati public, international exhibitors, and business communities at large.

"It's a bold new look," he said. "But it's not just about looking good. It's about meaning something. That's the difference. And that's the message we want the world to hear."

For more information, visit the EITF Facebook and Instagram pages or download the official EITF App. Applications are now open. Deadline and full criteria to be announced soon.

Stocks, dollar rebound after Trump backtracks on remarks over Fed

By Wayne Cole and
Amanda Cooper

SYDNEY/LONDON — European stocks rebounded on Wednesday, as investors drew some relief from U.S. President Donald Trump saying he had no plans to fire the head of the Federal Reserve, and hinting at lower tariffs for China.

The dollar initially leapt after Trump walked back his threats to dismiss Fed Chair Jerome Powell, which had shaken investor confidence in U.S. assets, although most of those gains had faded as trading began in Europe.

Trump also reiterated that he wanted to reach a deal with China where tariffs would not be anywhere near 145 per cent, adding that he would set the terms of a deal if Beijing did not enter talks.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent was reported on Tuesday as saying he believed there would be a de-escalation in U.S.-China trade tensions, but negotiations with Beijing had not yet started and would be a “slog”.

“While it is still early days, the mood in the market is evidently shifting and what was a strong ‘sell America’ vibe flowing through markets yesterday has in part reversed,” said Chris Weston, head of research at broker



▲ The German share price index DAX graph is pictured at the stock exchange in Frankfurt, Germany.

Pepperstone.

“Markets are becoming ever more conditioned to the president shooting from the hip and then reversing the stance like it was never a big issue.”

Europe’s STOXX 600 rose 1.7 per cent on a busy day for earnings, with German software company SAP and BE Semiconductor Industries — a supplier to the chipmaking industry - in focus, while a survey of business activity in Germany showed the private sector slipped back into contraction in early April.

U.S. stock futures, rose 2.5 per cent, suggesting a sharp rally on Wall Street later.

Upbeat earnings

Sentiment had already been shored up by some upbeat earnings, and Tesla gained 7 per cent in pre-market trading despite missing forecasts.

Tesla boss Elon Musk said on a call with analysts he would significantly reduce his involvement in work at the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency from next month to focus more on his many companies.

The dollar rose as much as 1.1 per cent against the Japanese yen, which has served as a major safe haven for anyone ditching U.S. assets, before backtracking to show a gain of 0.2 per cent to 141.98, just above

seven-month lows below 140.

The euro was down 0.2 per cent at \$1.139, while the British pound was down 0.2 per cent at \$1.331. Longer-dated Treasuries rallied as Trump’s reversal on Powell seemed to ease the threat to U.S. monetary and fiscal credibility. Investors have been worried that White House pressure to cut interest rates would risk fuelling inflation just as Trump’s tariffs boost prices.

However, the big picture has not changed enough at this point to prompt investors to start flocking back into U.S. assets, according to Jefferies strategist Mohit Kumar.

“Volatility is likely to stay, and we would use any sell-offs to add to positions in Europe and Asia. In these markets, it makes sense to remain humble and nimble, focus on the long-term views and trade around these headlines,” he said.

Yields on 30-year bonds fell 14 basis points to 4.74 per cent, while two-year yields rose 3 bps to 3.82 per cent, as investors attached a lower chance of any immediate rate cuts.

Tariffs are expected to hurt the global economy as the International Monetary Fund on Tuesday slashed its forecasts for growth in the United States, China and most other countries. Still, the general improvement in risk sentiment helped oil prices recover some of their hefty losses. Brent crude rose 0.8 per cent to \$67.96 a barrel.

Safe-haven gold ran into profit-taking and slipped 1.3 per cent to \$3,335 an ounce, off an all-time peak of \$3,500. (Reuters)



▲ Shoppers look for items as they shop at an outlet of retailer Checkers in Sandton City mall, in Sandton, South Africa.

SA inflation falls to five-year low in March as fuel, education costs ease

By Sfundu Parakozov and
Kopano Gumbi

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa’s annual inflation rate fell for the first time in five months in March to its lowest level since June 2020, due to a drop in fuel costs and softer price rises for tuition.

Headline consumer inflation eased to 2.7 per cent year-on-year from 3.2 per cent in February below the 2.9 per cent expected by economists polled by Reuters, and outside the South African Reserve Bank’s (SARB) 3 per cent to 6 per cent target range.

A breakdown by Statistics South Africa showed the fuel index was down 8.8 per cent last month.

Education fees, which are surveyed once a year in March, increased 4.5 per cent, slower than the previous year’s 6.4 per cent rise.

Some analysts thought the latest inflation numbers gave the central bank scope to cut interest rates at its next monetary policy meeting in May.

“There is ample room for the (central bank) to cut rates further to support the economy, to soften the hit from the global trade war,” Elize Kruger, a South Africa-based independent economist, said.

The SARB left its key lending rate unchanged at its last meeting in March after three consecutive cuts, citing risks from U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariffs and the country’s disputed national budget.

It stuck to that cautious tone in a biannual review of its monetary policy last week.

Elna Moolman at Standard Bank saw signs of weakness in the residential rental market in Wednesday’s release, which she said was helping keep inflationary pressures benign.

However, the SARB’s concerns around global tariffs and a weaker local currency meant further rate cuts may not necessarily happen soon, she said. (Reuters)

South African rand weaker after drop in inflation



▲ South African Rand coins are seen in this illustration picture.

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At 1416 GMT, the rand traded at 18.6375 against the dollar, about 0.2 per cent weaker than Tuesday’s close.

Trade in the rand has been highly volatile for weeks as financial markets have grappled with rifts in the ruling coalition over the national budget and uncertainty over U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariff plans.

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the South African Reserve Bank’s (SARB) 3 per cent to 6 per cent target range.

Despite domestic inflation being well under control, the SARB left its main lending rate unchanged last month after three consecutive rate cuts, citing risks from Trump’s trade war and the budget fallout.

It stuck to that cautious tone in a biannual review of its monetary policy last week, saying its confidence about the medium-term outlook for inflation had reduced significantly and the scope for policy easing had narrowed.

On the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the blue-chip Top-40 index last traded about 0.3 per cent weaker.

South Africa’s benchmark 2030 government bond rose, as the yield fell 13.5 basis points to 9.03 per cent. (Reuters)

Google, X next targets as Europe stays tough on tech regulation

ALPHABET'S, opens new tab Google and Elon Musk's X may be the next to face fines from European regulators, as they stay tough on Big Tech despite concerns of retaliatory U.S. tariffs, according to three sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

EU antitrust regulators on Wednesday imposed the first penalties under landmark EU legislation aimed at curbing the power of Big Tech, doling out total fines of 700 million euros (\$797 million) to Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab and Meta (META.O), opens new tab for violating the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and orders to stop anti-competitive practices.

U.S. President Donald Trump has taken issue with the new rules, believing they amount to a tariff on U.S. companies. But EU antitrust chief Teresa Ribera dismissed fears that she may cave to U.S. pressure and soften enforcement of the rules.

"Apple and Meta have fallen short of compliance with the DMA by implementing measures that reinforce the dependence of business users and consumers on their platforms," Ribera said in a statement on Wednesday. "All companies operating in the EU must follow our laws and respect European values," she said.

The EU's determination to press ahead with the fines raises a question over possible retaliatory action by the U.S., according to the International Association of Privacy Professionals.

"The U.S. Administration has declared it will consider responsive actions like tariffs to combat certain foreign government policies levied against U.S. companies," said Joe Jones, the IAPP's director of research and insights.

AT&T leans on bundled plans to beat estimates for subscriber additions

AT&T, opens new tab beat Wall Street estimates for wireless subscriber additions in the first quarter on Wednesday, driven by steady demand for its plans that bundled high-speed fiber services and 5G mobile offerings.

Shares of the Dallas-based company rose 3% in premarket trading. That compared with FactSet estimates of 258,300 additions.

After flagging elevated rate of subscribers leaving the service in January, AT&T ramped its deals with promotions for the latest iPhones to include trade-ins of old models in any condition.

Total revenue rose 2% to \$30.6 billion in the first quarter, compared with analysts' estimate of \$30.35 billion, according to LSEG data.

More than 40% of AT&T customers that use fiber also opted for its wireless plans, the company said.

The company has attracted subscribers with the January launch of the AT&T Guarantee, a policy of offering bill credits for any disruption



▲ A Google logo is seen at the company's headquarters in Mountain View, California, U.S.

The DMA, which was cited by Trump in an Executive Order in February, sets out a list of dos and don'ts for tech giants to make it easier for people to move between competing online services such as social media platforms, internet browsers and app stores and for smaller rivals to compete.

Imposing the fines shows that the European Commission has "bite" despite Trump's threat to slap tariffs on EU countries that fine U.S. companies, said one senior Commission official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

FOCUS ON COMPLIANCE OVER SANCTIONS

Still, the size of the fines is modest compared to the eye-popping penalties handed out by Ribera's predecessor Margrethe Vestager in previous years. Commission sources say this is due to the short period of the breaches, a focus on compliance rather than sanctions and the Trump

effect.

That leaves a question mark over whether Europe's future approach to regulating Big Tech could yet be impacted by political factors, the sources say.

The litmus test for Ribera will be whether she goes ahead in the coming months with an order forcing Google, opens new tab to sell part of its lucrative adtech business to address concerns that it may be favouring its own advertising services in a case dating from 2021, according to EU lawmakers and consumer organisations worried about weakening EU competition enforcement.

It would be the first time that the EU watchdog issues such an order in an antitrust case, underlining its deep concerns about Google's market power, according to Commission sources. Even Microsoft in its two decade-long antitrust battle with the Commission was spared such a drastic step. (Reuters)



▲ The AT&T logo is pictured during the Forbes Forum 2017 in Mexico City, Mexico.

on its network.

The results mark the first quarter that excludes the results of its 70% stake in DirecTV, which it is selling for \$7.6 billion.

The company reaffirmed its free cash flow and adjusted profit guidance for the year and said that it plans to commence share repurchas-

es in the second quarter.

Rival Verizon on Tuesday posted higher subscriber losses in the first quarter hurt by a fallout of recent price hikes and intense promotions in the market. T-Mobile (TMUS.O), opens new tab is scheduled to report on Thursday after markets close.

(Reuters)

Apple, Meta fined as EU presses ahead with tech probes

Apple, opens new tab was fined 500 million euros (\$570 million) on Wednesday and Meta (META.O), opens new tab 200 million euros, as European Union antitrust regulators handed out the first sanctions under landmark legislation aimed at curbing the power of Big Tech.

The EU fines could stoke tensions with U.S. President Donald Trump who has threatened to levy tariffs against countries that penalise U.S. companies.

They follow a year-long investigation by the European Commission, the EU executive, into whether the companies comply with the Digital Markets Act (DMA) that seeks to allow smaller rivals into markets dominated by the biggest companies.

The fines signal that the EU is sticking to its guns in enforcing the new rules, which were introduced in 2023. That is despite Trump citing the DMA while vowing in February to "defend American companies and innovators from overseas extortion".

Alphabet's (GOOGL.O), opens new tab Google and Elon Musk's X are also facing potential fines from European regulators.

The EU will be encouraged by a U.S. court judgment earlier this month which found that Google illegally dominates two markets for online advertising technology, Commission sources say. That ruling could pave the way for U.S. antitrust prosecutors to seek a breakup of its ad products.

Apple said it would challenge the EU fine.

"Today's announcements are yet another example of the European Commission unfairly targeting Apple in a series of decisions that are bad for the privacy and security of our users, bad for products, and force us to give away our technolo-

gy for free," Apple said in an emailed statement.

Meta also criticised the EU decision.

"The European Commission is attempting to handicap successful American businesses while allowing Chinese and European companies to operate under different standards," its Chief Global Affairs Officer Joel Kaplan said in an emailed statement.

"This isn't just about a fine; the Commission forcing us to change our business model effectively imposes a multi-billion-dollar tariff on Meta while requiring us to offer an inferior service."

The fines are modest compared to the penalties meted out by the previous EU antitrust chief Margrethe Vestager during her term. Sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, have said this is due to the short period of the breaches, a focus on compliance rather than sanctions, and a desire to avoid possible retaliation from Trump.

PAY-OR-CONSENT MODEL

The EU competition watchdog said Apple must remove technical and commercial restrictions that prevent app developers from steering users to cheaper deals outside the App Store.

It said Meta's pay-or-consent model introduced in November 2023 breached the DMA in the period up to November 2024, when it tweaked it to use less personal data for targeted advertising.

The model gives Facebook and Instagram users who consent to be tracked a free service that is funded by advertising revenues. Alternatively, they can pay for an ad-free service.

Meta is discussing with the EU the new version introduced in November last year to see if it is DMA compliant. The companies have two months to comply with the orders or risk daily fines.

(Reuters)



▲ An Apple logo is pictured in an Apple store in Paris, France.

Kenya's ant-smuggler bust exposes lucrative underground trade

KENYAN police who raided a national park guesthouse earlier this month aimed not to bust elephant tusk or rhino horn poachers but a more esoteric ring trading a much smaller, more lucrative item by weight - queen ants.

Two Belgian teenagers were arrested for wildlife trafficking at Jane Guesthouse in Naivasha on the edge of Hell's Gate National Park. They, along with a Vietnamese man and a Kenyan national also accused of ant trafficking, pleaded guilty and will be sentenced on May 7, a magistrate said on Wednesday.

Kenyan prosecutors have valued the seizures of queens taken from giant African harvester ant colonies at about 1.2 million Kenyan shillings (\$9,300).

Depending on the number and variety of each species found, however, Reuters calculated the haul would have been worth as much as \$1 million if it had reached European shores.

"It's like cocaine," said Dino Martins, director of the Turkana Basin Institute and one of Kenya's leading insect experts. "The price of cocaine in Colombia versus getting a kilogram in the European market is such a big value addition, that's why people do it."

Based on the average cost of giant African harvester ants at six retailers in Britain, each of the roughly 5,440 queens seized at Nairobi airport according to court documents is worth around £175 (\$233).

Ant aficionados pay large sums to maintain ant colonies in large transparent vessels known as formicariums, which provide insights into their intricate social structures and behaviours.

But queen ants are vital for any colony as they are the only ones capable of laying eggs that grow into worker, soldier and future queen ants, meaning that trafficking can jeopardise colonies critical to Kenya's wild-



▲ Belgium nationals David Lornoy and Seppe Lodewijckx look on, after they appeared in court during presentation of pre-sentencing report of their case after they pleaded guilty of illegal possession and trafficking of garden ants, at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) Law Courts, in Nairobi, Kenya.

life ecosystem.

MASS DEATH IN TRANSIT

Martins said the retail value of the bug bust should be tempered by the expectation that as many as 90% of them would likely have died in transit by traffickers to Europe and Asia from disease, bacteria and freezing temperatures.

Nonetheless, the record seizures have raised questions about whether the attempted heist was a one-off by amateur enthusiasts, or a wider network of wildlife traffickers exploring new products and markets.

Ant exports are permitted from Kenya with licenses, though the regulations are dif-

icult to navigate, Martins said.

"We are not criminals, we are 18 years old, we are naive, and I just want to go home to start my life," one of the Belgian defendants, David Lornoy, said at the trial last week.

The Kenya Wildlife Service, however, said the case signals a landmark shift in biopiracy trends from iconic large mammals to lesser-known species that are no less ecologically critical.

"This case represents far more than insect smuggling," said Erustus Kanga, director general of KWS.

"We're seeing organised crime syndicates diversify from traditional ivory poaching to target our entire biodiversity - from medic-

inal plants, insects to micro-organisms," he said in a statement.

Samuel Mutua, a wildlife crime expert at the International Fund for Animal Welfare, said the ant case qualifies as organised crime. "Irrespective of their age, they were able to get a lot of ants," he said.

Ant exports are permitted from Kenya with licenses, though the regulations are difficult to navigate, Martins said.

"We are not criminals, we are 18 years old, we are naive, and I just want to go home to start my life," one of the Belgian defendants, David Lornoy, said at the trial last week.

(Reuters)

Vedanta weighs US listing to raise \$1 billion for Zambian copper assets

VEDANTA Resources, is considering a U.S. public listing for its Zambian unit Konkola Copper Mines as one of its options to try to raise about \$1 billion for mine development, three sources familiar with the details, told Reuters.

The miner, owned by Indian billionaire Anil Agarwal, has hired Barclays and Citigroup to advise on the plans for an initial public offering, said the sources, who declined to be named due to sensitivity around the discussions.

Vedanta is considering New York as one of the options to list KCM, as the Zambian unit is known, the sources said.

They said the discussions were at an early stage and a timeline had yet to be finalised.

A spokesperson for Vedanta Resources declined to comment beyond saying various options were under consideration.

"We continue to evaluate a range of financing options, including internal accruals, debt instruments, and equity options, as we invest and grow our operations across the world," the spokesperson said.

Citigroup declined to comment, while Barclays did not respond to emailed questions from Reuters.

Vedanta has said it wants to raise capital as part of its plans to gradually increase copper output to about 300,000 metric tons per year over the next five years.

KCM's output dwindled as Agarwal fought a protracted legal battle to reclaim the assets after former Zambian president Edgar Lun-

gu's administration forced KCM into provisional liquidation. It had accused Vedanta of failing to invest to boost copper production.

Agarwal regained control of the copper mines, smelter and refinery last year.

Vedanta has since established a U.S.-based entity, Global Transition Resources Inc., which it said in a post on LinkedIn produces copper, cobalt and gold in Africa.

Reuters could not immediately establish whether Global Transition Resources would be the entity to house the assets in question in the event of a U.S. listing.

Copper, with uses from power to construction, is in demand from the electric vehicle sector and new applications such as data centres for artificial intelligence.

Vedanta said KCM holds one of the world's highest grade deposits of copper, together with reserves of about 400,000 tons of cobalt, another mineral needed for the transition to cleaner energy.

Since recovering the assets from the Zambian government, Vedanta has secured short-term financing and started paying debts to local creditors, including bills for supplies of electricity, which had built up during the period. It also increased spending on the communities surrounding the mines.

Vedanta last year attempted to sell a stake to United Arab Emirates-based International Resources Holding (IRH), but the deal collapsed due to valuation differences, Reuters reported.

A separate process to sell at least a 30% equity stake in the mines had not been suc-



▲ A bird flies past the logo of Vedanta installed on the facade of its headquarters in Mumbai, India.

cessful, leaving listing as one of the most viable options, one of the sources said.

Vedanta Resources, the UK-based parent of Indian miner Vedanta Ltd (VDAN.NS), opens new tab owns an 80% shareholding in KCM and the Zambian government holds

the remaining 20% stake through state investment firm ZCCM-IH (ZCCM.LZ), opens new tab.

Vedanta is splitting its oil-to-metals conglomerate into five separate businesses, with plans to separately list the units. (Reuters)

DR. ALI Sherif normally gives about 50 doses of the measles vaccine to children each month at his clinic in Hobbs, New Mexico, near the Texas state line.

The number of shots at his clinic has surged about 25%, however, in recent weeks as local parents seek immunizations to protect their toddlers and school-age children from a growing measles outbreak that has infected more than 600 people and led to three deaths.

Like thousands of other doctors across the country, Sherif relies on a little-known federal program to ensure he has those shots on hand for families at no cost to them.

The Vaccines for Children program is funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by state public health officials. With an annual budget of roughly \$5 billion, the vaccines program is responsible for about half the jabs administered to U.S. children every year.

The initiative funds vaccine purchases from drug manufacturers including Merck and GlaxoSmithKline at a discount, while state health departments implement the program and enroll medical providers. A dose of MMR vaccine costs about \$26 under the program compared to \$95 in the private sector, according to a CDC price list.

But ongoing cuts in federal health funding and personnel could jeopardize the effectiveness of this longstanding program that's become a key cog in America's disease-fighting machinery, according to disease experts and former CDC officials.

The Trump administration recently fired about 10,000 employees at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including significant reductions at CDC that are part of a massive downsizing of the federal workforce. HHS has said another 10,000 left voluntarily.

The CDC employees who staff the children's vaccine program were largely untouched, three sources familiar with the situation said. However, about 20 others were fired who comprised a unit that helped pro-



Trump cuts threaten free vaccine program for kids amid measles outbreak

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At one large pediatric clinic in Albuquerque, manager Shawna Maestas said she orders about \$100,000 worth of various vaccines each month through the federal program. "We've had quite a big uptick in vaccine administration lately," she said. "But if families had to pay for it, they would push it off."

Over the past decade, Texas has administered 5.6 million doses of the MMR vaccine through the program, according to state data provided to Reuters. New Mexico has received nearly 364,000 doses of the MMR vaccine over the same time period, records show.

A spokesman for the New Mexico health department said "vaccine supply and distribution have continued with no interruptions."

(Reuters)

Pope Francis' body to be taken to St Peter's Basilica ahead of funeral

THOUSANDS of people poured into St. Peter's Basilica on Wednesday to pay their final respects to Pope Francis, who is lying in state for three days ahead of his funeral on Saturday. Crowds stretched down the main boulevard leading through Rome into the Vatican under an unusually warm spring sun, pressing forward slowly as people took their turn to see the late pontiff, laid out in an open coffin.

The body of the 88-year-old pope, who died two days ago in his rooms at the Vatican's Santa Marta guesthouse after suffering a stroke, was brought to St. Peter's in a solemn procession earlier on Wednesday.

Red-hatted cardinals, bishops, candle-carrying friars and helmeted Swiss Guards walked slowly into the vast, sunlit square in front of the basilica as a choir chanted psalms and prayers in Latin while a bell gently tolled.

As the coffin crossed St. Peter's Square, a crowd of several thousand broke into repeated applause - a traditional Italian sign of respect at such events.

"He's like a member of the family. Somebody very close to our hearts, somebody who made the Church very accessible to everybody and inclusive to everybody," said Rachel McKay, a pilgrim from Britain.

Vatican officials rushed to help 14 white-gloved, black-suited pallbearers carry the coffin up a stone incline, before the procession passed through St. Peter's giant bronze doors and into the hushed interior of the ornate, cavernous church.



▲ Members of the Swiss Guard stand next to the coffin containing Pope Francis' body, on the day of the translation of his body, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

Francis, who had only recently left hospital after five weeks being treated for double pneumonia, last appeared in public on Sunday, when he delighted onlookers gathered to celebrate Easter by being driven around the packed square in his white, open-topped popemobile.

MIXTURE OF EMOTIONS

As the formal ceremony to bring the pope's body to the basilica was ending, Sr. Genevieve Jeanningros, a nun from the Roman seaside town of Ostia, stood by his casket and cried.

Jeanningros, known for her work with the LGBTQ community, had hosted Francis for visits in Ostia several times.

(Reuters)



UK company activity weakens by most in more than 2 years as US trade war rages

BRITISH companies buckled in April under the strain of an escalating global trade war that threatens to tip the economy into a new downturn, a survey showed on Wednesday.

The S&P Global Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a gauge of the private sector economy, slid to 48.2 in April from 51.5 in March.

Readings below 50 denote a contraction in business activity.

Export orders fell at the fastest pace since the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, while costs faced by businesses grew at the fastest rate in more than two years as higher employment taxes and an increased minimum wage kicked in.

Despite the inflationary warning signal, the sharp drop in business activity is likely to further cement expectations that the Bank of England will cut interest rates next month - something that had looked uncer-

tain a few weeks ago.

Britain's economy defied expectations in February by growing 0.5%, according to official data published earlier this month.

Wednesday's PMI suggested the economy is now contracting at a quarterly pace of around 0.3%, S&P Global Chief Business Economist Chris Williamson said.

Although Britain hopes it will emerge with a relatively low tariff rate on goods sent to the United States compared with competing economies, Brexit has already weakened exporters and weaker global growth is likely to hurt their prospects further.

"The collapse in confidence and drop in output during April raise red flags as to the near-term economic outlook and add pressure on the Bank of England to reduce interest rates again at its May meeting," Williamson said.

Financial markets on Tuesday fully priced in a BoE rate cut at its May 8 announcement. (Reuters)



By **Siphesihle Dlamini**
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE Makoti Festival, a vibrant celebration of culture, music, and community, is set to headline this week's entertainment gig guide, drawing crowds from near and far.

This annual event not only showcases the rich heritage of Eswatini but also serves as a platform for local artists, artisans, and culinary talents to shine. With a diverse lineup of performances, traditional dances, and mouth-watering cuisine, the festival is poised to offer something for everyone. Eswatini Daily News has meticulously prepared a comprehensive guide to ensure that festivalgoers make the most of this spectacular weekend.

►► **LADIES NIGHT**

When: Thursday

Where: Mdzimba View

Shisanyama

Fee: E150

Fans of South African reality television are in for a treat as Sweet Guluva, the charismatic winner of Big Brother SA Season 5, has confirmed his much-anticipated appearance at Mdzimba View Shisanyama. The event, aptly titled 'Ladies Night,' is scheduled for April 24, 2025. Sweet Guluva, whose real name is Akhonamathemba Mbele, has taken the nation by storm since his victory on the popular reality show. The 'Ladies Night' event is set to feature an impressive lineup of performances, headlined by the popular South African musical duo Shakes & Les. Attendees can also look forward to electrifying sets from a host of talented artists, including Ayacity, DJ Tap, ItsAllBlaq, Maphi, Expo, and Wassabee. With such a diverse array of musical offerings, the night is sure to be filled with excitement and entertainment. The event will be expertly hosted by popular MCs Sintour and Nqaba. For those looking to join in on the festivities, general tickets are available for E150, while VIP tickets can be purchased for E350.

►► **POETRY & ACOUSTICS**

When: Thursday

Where: Bahle Gallery

Fee: E200

The talented Eswatini vocalist Lunga Sky is gearing up to take centre stage at the highly anticipated Poetry & Acoustics event, a monthly gathering that has become a cultural cornerstone in Eswatini's vibrant artistic scene. Scheduled for the evening of April 24, 2025, at the Bahle Gallery, this event promises to be a captivating blend of music and poetry, inviting audiences to immerse themselves in a realm of creativity and heartfelt storytelling. Lunga Sky, known for his soulful voice and emotive performances, will be accompanied by the talented Mluleki on guitar and Marcus on percussion, ensuring an unforgettable musical experience.

The event, hosted by the Mic'd Emotions collective, will kick off at 6 pm, with tickets priced at E200, making it an accessible evening of artistic expression for all. Poetry & Acoustics has quickly established itself as a beacon of artistic expression in Eswatini, providing a sanctuary for musicians, poets, and performers to share their talents in an

intimate and welcoming space.

The unique format of the event includes open mic sessions, designed to pave the way for the headline performance.

►► **BUSHFIRE FIREFLY GRAND FINALE**

When: Thursday

Where: House On Fire

Fee: E160

Fans can look forward to an electrifying atmosphere as the finalists perform live, showcasing their unique styles and musical prowess. The Grand Finale will feature special performances from renowned Swati-South African Amapiano guest artist Zee Nxumalo, who is confirmed to light up the stage. Additionally, the night will be energized by one of Eswatini's hottest DJs, DJ Stickx. Doors for the event will open at 7 pm, with tickets priced at E160, making it an accessible opportunity for music lovers to experience the richness of local talent. Boucher emphasized the importance of this event, stating, "Catch hot live performances by our Top 10 at the MTN Bushfire Firefly Grand Finale. It's going to be an epic show!" One of the most exciting aspects of the competition is that the Top 3 artists will earn coveted performance slots at the prestigious Bushfire Festival, scheduled

to take place from May 30 to June 1, 2025, at Malandelas Lawns. The Bushfire Firefly competition is more than just a talent showcase but a vital initiative aimed at nurturing the next generation of musicians in Eswatini. Since its inception, the program has empowered over 100 emerging artists, encouraging them to pursue their dreams and hone their craft.

►► **BASED ON A TRUE STORY**

When: Friday

Where: The George Hotel

Fee: E150

One of the nation's most cherished funny-men, Mdura says he is ready to host an exhilarating comedy show titled "Based On A True Story." Set to take place this Friday, April 25, 2025, at The George Hotel, the event is set to be an evening brimming with laughter and relatable storytelling, kicking off at 7 pm.

With pre-sale tickets priced at E150 and door tickets at E200, fans are encouraged to act quickly to secure their spots for what is expected to be a night to remember. Mdura, whose real name is Mduduzi Dlamini, has long been a staple in the Eswatini entertainment landscape. His journey in comedy began years ago, and he has since

built a reputation for his unique ability to weave humour into the fabric of everyday life. In a recent interview, he expressed his excitement about bringing back the beloved show, which first premiered in 2018 under the same title. "That show was a turning point for me," he reflected. "It allowed me to connect deeply with my audience, sharing stories from my childhood that resonated with many."

►► **MAKOTI FESTIVAL**

When: Saturday

Where: Malkerns Country Club

Fee: E300

It wouldn't be a Makoti celebration without a touch of culture, and this year's Makoti Festival is set to deliver just that. The festival has unveiled an exciting lineup of cultural performances featuring a mix of local and international traditional groups. Scheduled to take place on April 26, 2025, at Malkerns Country Club in Eswatini, the Makoti Festival is a celebration of culture, creativity, and strength. This year, attendees can look forward to captivating performances from the Ingwenyama Cup Traditional Dance (Lutsango) winners Macetjeni Lutsango, Eswatini Broadcasting Information Centre (EBIS) Lutsango, and Eswatini Arts and Culture Lutsango. Sibhaca will also take center stage, represented by the renowned Ezulwini Sibhaca, who are also winners of the Ingwenyama Cup Traditional Dance.

Adding an international flair to the festivities, the festival will feature traditional performances from Botswana's Khumagadi and the energetic Moz Fire Sound. This year's edition promises to be a spectacular affair, featuring a star-studded lineup that includes Dr Rebecca Malope, Shongwe & Khuphuka, Young Zesh and Ntate Stunna among others.

Makoti Festival weekend of culture

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

TALENTED Eswatini poet, Siya Imbongi, is set to headline the highly anticipated War Words 6.

Scheduled for June 28, 2025, the event will take place at Bethel Court Vineyard Hotel. War Words, aptly named for the intensity and passion it embodies, has become a staple in the local arts scene, drawing poetry lovers and creators from all walks of life. This year's edition is poised to elevate the experience to new heights, showcasing a battle of punchlines with audiences snapping their fingers in rhythm and nodding their heads in awe, reminiscent of the iconic Thanos from 'The Avengers.' The event aims to blend the raw energy of spoken word with theatrical flair, creating a memorable night for all who attend.

Directed by the visionary Anthonimass, War Words 6 is set to exceed all expectations, ensuring that the echoes of its verses linger long after the final performance. In an exclusive interview, Anthonimass shared his vision for this year's event, emphasizing its inclusive nature. "War Words 6 is a platform for poets of all skill levels to showcase their craft," he stated. "We want to create an environment where emerging talents and seasoned veterans can shine."

This year's theme, "The Rise of the Army," sets the stage for an action-packed evening filled with high-quality content that promises to resonate with audiences. Anthonimass expressed his excitement about the unique experience War Words 6 will deliver compared to previous editions. "We've been taking poetry shows to another level, but with this one, we're taking it up a notch," he declared. "Expect nothing less than a spectacular production that captivates the audience from start to finish."

The commitment to quality is evident in Anthonimass' vision for the event. "We want to attract more people to poetry through a

Siya Imbongi headlines War Words 6



▲ Siya Imbongi.

high-quality produced show, from graphics to performances by some of the best poets in the land," he explained. "Our aim is to gain more ground through poetry and achieve significant growth in the audience's appreciation for this art form."

With tickets priced at E120 and available

through smartticket.co.sz, Mabaso urged poetry enthusiasts to secure their seats immediately. "We want to achieve a sold-out poetry show, and with the excitement building, I encourage everyone to buy their tickets early," he said.



▲ Zee Nxumalo.

Zee Nxumalo's song nominated, set to perform at Metro FM Awards

A proud moment for Eswatini as one of its own, Zee Nxumalo, has been nominated for her song and will also perform at the upcoming biggest music awards in South Africa, the Metro FM Awards next month.

The highly anticipated Metro FM Music Awards will be held in Mpumalanga on May 3 at the Mbombela Stadium. Zee Nxumalo, a rising star in the Afro-pop and Amapiano genres, has been nominated under the Best Kwaito/Gqom Song category for her infectious track titled 'FOMO.'

This vibrant song features collaborations with fellow artists Goldmax, Dlala Thukzin, and Funky Qla, showcasing a blend of talent that has captivated audiences across the region. The Best RSA Amapiano genre leads the pack this year, with renowned artists Kabza De Small, DJ Maphorisa, and Scotts Maphuma each receiving four nominations, reflecting the competitive nature of the awards.

Crowning Greatness

This year's awards theme, "Crowning Greatness," marks the 25th edition of the Metro FM Music Awards, a significant milestone in celebrating South Africa's rich musical heritage. The ceremony is sponsored by the Motsepe Foundation, which will reward each category winner with E50,000, while the coveted Song of the Year winner will walk away with an impressive E150,000. This financial incentive not only recognizes artistic excellence but also aims to uplift and support artists in their creative endeavors.

In addition to the awards ceremony, attendees can look forward to a live concert featuring a star-studded line-up of performances. Among the artists set to take the stage are Zee Nxumalo, DJ Maphorisa, KO, Master KG, Black Motion, LKG, Uncool MC, Lamiez and Benny Mayengani.

This event promises to be a celebration of music and culture, bringing together fans and artists for an unforgettable night. Notably, Zee Nxumalo will also be performing in Eswatini on Thursday at the Firefly Grand Finale at House on Fire, further solidifying her presence in the music scene.

At just 22 years old, the Eswatini-born artist has made a significant impact on the music industry, particularly known for her infectious rhythms and soulful melodies. Her hit single 'Thula Mabota' has amassed over 5 million views on YouTube, establishing her as a prominent figure in the Afro-pop and Amapiano genres.

Impisi Rally reveals latest developments

THE iconic Impisi Rally, a major event in the Southern African motorcycle scene, is gearing up to celebrate its 10th anniversary spectacularly this year.

Scheduled to take place from May 2 to 4, 2025, at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre in Manzini, the rally promises to be a thrilling weekend filled with camaraderie, charity, and, of course, motorcycles. As one of the region's premier motorcycle events, the Impisi Rally has grown from a modest gathering into a vibrant celebration of motorcycle culture, attracting enthusiasts from across the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

This year's rally is particularly significant, not only because of its milestone anniversary but also due to its strong focus on charity, as confirmed by the president of the Hyena Motorcycle Club, Mattie Potgieter. "This 10th edition will be dedicated to charity, and we are determined to make a meaningful difference in our communities," said Potgieter.

The entry fee for the event is set at E200, with additional costs for camping and amenities. Camping is free, while a cooler box can be brought for E50. Secured parking is free, although venue area parking will cost E50. The rally will also feature a lineup of entertainment from local DJs and artists, ensuring a lively atmosphere for all



▲ Impisi Rally to celebrate 10th anniversary which will be dedicated to charity at Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre.

attendees.

One of the key highlights of this year's rally is the partnership with the Manzini City Council, a collaboration aimed at giving back to the less fortunate in the surrounding areas. "We have partnered with the Manzini Municipality for our charity drive, which will include a blanket drive. We will also donate food parcels and clothes to different constituencies," Potgieter explained.

The charity initiative will focus on three

care points within the Manzini region: Zakhele Care Point, Manzini Club, and Manzini North. Potgieter emphasized that all proceeds from the bikers, including donations from those participating in the event, will be directed to these causes. The rally aims to bring together both the biker community and the wider public to support the less fortunate, ensuring that the event has a positive social impact beyond just the thrills and excitement of the weekend's activities.

State bankrolls Winnie Khumalo's funeral three months after burial

THE Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture has apologised and finally approved payment for kwaito legend Winnie Khumalo's funeral.

The funds were authorised on April 15, about three months after Khumalo's funeral took place at the Protea South Multipurpose Hall in Soweto on January 18.

In an email to the Khumalo family, the department apologised for the delay and assured them that the funds would be paid in the current financial year.

The email, which was addressed to Khumalo's sister, Tshepi Rakepile, reads: "This is a formal email to confirm our telephone conversation and to inform you that all the documentation for the funds has been approved and authorised.

"The funds couldn't be transferred in the last financial year and were placed in a queue for transfer

at the beginning of the new financial year in April 2025.

"At this stage, we are awaiting the finalisation of the transition process from the previous financial year to the new one, after which the transfer will be completed."

Collen Hlatshwayo, an official from the department, said: "Please accept our apologies and be assured that all is in order. As soon as the process is complete, I will provide an update."

The apology and payment come after a Sunday World article revealed that the families of Khumalo and Victor "Doc Shebeleza" Bogopane had not received any financial or psychological support from the department's sponsored Silapha Intervention Wellness Programme.

Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie previously told the National Assembly that both fam-

ilies had rejected support from the programme.

"The service provider contacted Doc Shebeleza's CC records, Amaha Organisation, and reached out to Winnie Khumalo's label, Winkay Records, during these difficult times to offer the families grief, loss, psychological, and social support.

"The spokespersons for the [record] labels took the details and asked for family privacy, advising that they would share the information with the families after the funerals," said McKenzie at the National Assembly at the time.

Families refute the minister's claims

However, both families refuted McKenzie's claims, and McKenzie has since taken to social media to also refute the families' claims.

(SundayWorld)



▲ Kwaito legend Winnie Khumalo.



▲ Thando and Siyacela Dlamuka's reality show 'Isencane Lengane' on Moja Love has once again come under fire from viewers due to the abusive behaviour seen on the Moja Love show.

Moja Love responds to viewer backlash over 'Isencane Lengane'

CHANNEL Moja Love has come under fire from viewers because of its reality show "Isencane Lengane".

IOL reached out to Moja Love for a response to the latest backlash from viewers regarding the reality show. The show follows the lives of Thando and Siyacela Dlamuka, who got married as teenagers in 2019.

The channel confirmed they have received various complaints lodged with the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) and their legal department is addressing the complaints.

"It is important to mention that the show is a reality show that showcases real-life stories and embraces various cultural aspects of the lives of the main casts. The channel does not condone any acts of violence and/or intimidation," said the channel.

In a recent episode, an explosive argument erupts over Siyacela's decision to take on a second wife. The couple's discussion

escalates and Siyacela is seen hurling insults at Thando and the family elders.

The channel also noted how the BCCSA Tribunal found that the "Isencane Lengane" did not breach any provision of the BCCSA where similar complaints were launched against the Channel a few years ago.

In 2023, the BCCSA fined Moja Love R50,000 because it neglected to "proactively rectify the violent content". However, the channel was cleared on appeal.

Women's advocacy group Women For Change is among the voices calling for the reality show's discontinuation.

"This is not just irresponsible, it is dangerous. By broadcasting such abuse without adequate intervention and accountability, Moja Love is normalising and trivialising gender-based violence, sending the harmful message that abuse is acceptable if it brings in viewers."

(Sunday World)

YouTube turns 20: The evolution of digital media and entertainment

TODAY marks two decades since YouTube's very first video hit the internet.

On April 23, 2005, Jawed Karim, one of YouTube's co-founders, uploaded a modest 19-second clip titled "Me at the zoo."

That short video has since become an internet icon, amassing over 354 million views and securing its place as one of YouTube's most-watched non-music videos.

That simple upload marked the start of a platform that would go on to redefine digital media and reshape online entertainment forever.

Fast forward 20 years, and YouTube has grown into a global powerhouse.

It reaches over three billion viewers monthly and boasts more than two billion logged-in users every month.

Every minute, more than 500 hours of new content are uploaded, ranging from DIY tutorials and comedy skits to educational lectures and live sports.

The platform has continually evolved, expanding into podcasts, live streams, original series, and YouTube Shorts to

compete with the likes of TikTok and Instagram.

With just a camera and an internet connection, creators around the world have not only built audiences but careers as well.

Today, YouTube is not only a leading source of entertainment but also the world's largest free educational tool.

It's become a springboard for digital celebrities, with top creators earning millions through ads, brand deals, and merchandise.

But its impact goes far beyond fun and fame.

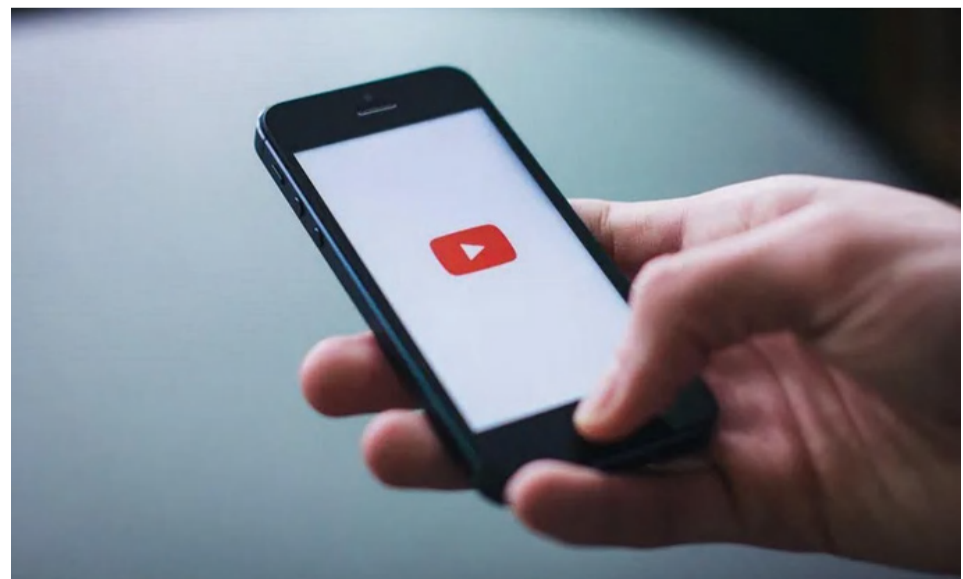
YouTube has played a major role in shaping political discourse, amplifying social movements, and transforming journalism.

Livestreams of protests, citizen reporting, and political commentary now have a global platform.

As YouTube celebrates this milestone, the IOL News YouTube channel stands as a vibrant part of this digital ecosystem.

A digital extension of Independent Online (IOL), the channel offers the latest news, in-depth reporting, and exclusive interviews.

(IOL Entertainment)



▲ Digital media platform youtube turned 20 years on Wednesday.



WHEN you're trying to lose weight, it's important to find a sustainable eating pattern that balances convenience, nutrition, and appropriate portion sizes.

While many people may associate processed foods with excess calories, unhealthy fats, and added sugars, not all processed foods are harmful. In fact, some can support weight loss when chosen mindfully and incorporated into a balanced diet.

Here's how you can integrate minimally processed foods in a way that helps you meet your health and weight loss goals without compromising on nutrition.

Canned and packaged proteins

Protein plays a critical role in promoting fullness and supporting muscle retention during weight loss. Several processed protein options can be easy to include in your meals.

Canned beans are a fantastic choice, offering protein and fiber, which contribute to a feeling of fullness. They are also shelf-stable, easy to prepare, and budget-friendly.

Beans such as black beans, kidney beans, and chickpeas can be added to salads, soups, stews, and grain bowls for an extra protein boost. Low sodium or no-salt-added canned beans are available in case you need to monitor your sodium intake.

Greek yogurt — especially the low fat and plain varieties — is another great processed protein source. In addition to protein, it contains probiotics, which support digestive health and may help with weight management.

Food options to try

- ▶ canned beans (e.g., black beans, kidney beans, chickpeas)
- ▶ precooked lentils (great for adding to salads or wraps)
- ▶ frozen turkey meatballs
- ▶ frozen veggie burgers
- ▶ packaged chicken sausage
- ▶ tofu or tempeh (try pre-marinated versions for added flavor)
- ▶ low fat or Greek yogurt (plain or lightly sweetened with fruit)
- ▶ cottage cheese
- ▶ hummus
- ▶ canned tuna or salmon (packed in water or olive oil for a healthy fat option)
- ▶ edamame (frozen or fresh for a protein-packed snack)

When choosing canned and packaged foods, try to select options that are lower in sodium and saturated fat.

Frozen foods

Frozen fruits and vegetables are key components of many healthy eating plans, particularly for weight loss. One major advantage of frozen produce is its nutrient retention.

Freezing preserves the nutrients in fruits and vegetables. This often means they're just as nutritious as fresh fruits and vegetables (and sometimes even more so), since fresh produce can lose nutrients during transportation and storage.

Frozen produce is typically more affordable than fresh produce and allows you to enjoy a year-round supply of nutritious ingredients. Plus, it's a convenient and waste-reducing option since it can be stored for longer periods without spoiling.

Processed foods that support weight loss



Food options to try

- ▶ frozen spinach, peas, broccoli, cauliflower, or mixed vegetable blends
- ▶ frozen fruit (e.g., berries, mangoes, peaches) for smoothies, oatmeal, or yogurt parfaits
- ▶ frozen riced cauliflower or broccoli for low carb meal options
- ▶ frozen stir-fry vegetable blends for quick meals
- ▶ frozen sweet potato chunks (great for roasting or adding to soups)
- ▶ frozen mixed berries for smoothies and desserts or as a topping for oatmeal
- ▶ frozen avocado slices for blending into smoothies or eating on toast

Whole grain products

Whole grains are an important part of a balanced diet, especially when pursuing weight loss. They're rich in fiber, which promotes fullness and supports digestive health.

They can also help stabilize your blood sugar levels, reducing hunger and cravings throughout the day.

It's essential to choose whole grain products that are minimally processed so that you can reap the full health benefits. Many commercial products, such as cereals and breads, may contain added sugars or refined grains, which can undermine your nutrition goals.

Look for whole grain options that are high in fiber and low in added sugars. Carefully reading nutrition labels can help you make healthier choices and avoid hidden ingredients that can hinder your progress.

Food options to try

- ▶ whole grain cereals (look for high fiber, low sugar options)
- ▶ whole wheat or sprouted grain bread
- ▶ brown rice, quinoa, farro, or barley
- ▶ pasta made from whole grains or from legumes such as chickpeas or lentils
- ▶ oatmeal (steel cut, old-fashioned, or rolled oats)
- ▶ whole grain crackers or rice cakes (for a healthy snack option)
- ▶ popcorn (air-popped or lightly seasoned for a fiber-rich snack)

Pre-portioned packaged foods

A common challenge in weight loss is managing your calorie intake. Portion sizes can sometimes become larger than



intended, making it harder to maintain a balanced diet. This is where individually portioned packaged foods can help. Single-serving packages can make it easier to stick to calorie limits and take the guesswork out of meal planning. These foods can be both convenient and nutritious, offering an easy solution when you're short on time.

Research suggests that portion-controlled food options can help people consume fewer calories, which is a key element for weight loss.

Food options to try

- ▶ single-serving packaged nuts
- ▶ single-serving Greek yogurt or cottage cheese
- ▶ individually portioned microwaveable meals (look for options that provide a balance of nutrients)
- ▶ snack packs of hummus and veggies
- ▶ pre-portioned fruit cups (without added sugar)
- ▶ Make sure to select products that are low in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats, as these ingredients can negatively affect your overall health and weight loss efforts.

Making smarter choices

Processed foods can fit into a healthy eating plan, but it's important to make thoughtful, informed choices that align with your weight loss goals.

Here are a few strategies for choosing processed foods that can support weight management:

▶ **Read nutrition labels:** Labels are your best resource for identifying hidden ingredients such as added sugars, saturated fat, and excessive sodium. Pay attention to serving sizes and note that "low fat" or "sugar-free" labels do not always equate to healthier options.

▶ **Focus on nutrient density:** Opt for foods that offer a high amount of nutrients relative to their calorie content. For example, choose low fat dairy products that are rich in calcium and protein, or select fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables that provide essential vitamins and minerals.

▶ **Balance convenience and nutrition:** Choosing nutritious foods that are also convenient can help you stay on track with your weight loss goals while still enjoying a variety of foods that support your overall health.

Receive expert advice, tips to build healthy habits, and the latest on nutrition and fitness delivered straight to your inbox.

Takeaway

Incorporating processed foods into a weight loss plan doesn't require sacrificing the health or convenience of your diet.

By selecting nutrient-dense options such as pre-portioned foods, canned proteins, frozen produce, and whole grain products, you can create a balanced eating strategy that supports your goals.

Being mindful of ingredients, making informed choices, and finding a balance between convenience and nutrition can help you enjoy a variety of foods that nourish your body and support your weight management efforts.

With these strategies in place, minimally processed foods can be a valuable tool on your weight loss journey. **Healthline**



Is intermittent fasting or calorie restriction better for weight loss?

INTERMITTENT fasting has long been debated as a weight loss technique.

Now a new study looks at how effective it is compared to daily calorie counting.

In the study, published Monday in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, researchers monitored the weight changes among 125 participants in two groups: those who followed a daily caloric restriction diet and those who followed the 4:3 intermittent fasting diet, which consists of 4 unrestricted days and 3 nonconsecutive fasting days per week.

"On non-fast days, participants in the 4:3 intermittent fasting group did not have to restrict energy intake, but were encouraged to make healthy food choices," according to news release. On fasting days, they were to cut calorie intake by about 80%. Those in the calorie restriction group were given a daily goal of cutting their caloric intake by 34.3%.

Participants were aged 18 to 60 years old, with a range of body mass index, or BMI, of 27 to 46. (A BMI of 27 is in the "overweight" range, 30-39 is considered "obese" and over 40 is "morbidly obese.") Both groups were given free gym membership and encouraged to exercise for at least 300 minutes per week. They also received comprehensive behavioral support throughout the process, including calorie counting instruction and guidance on target dietary macronutrients.

After 12 months, results showed the intermittent fasting group saw greater reductions in weight than the calorie-counting group.

"Participants in the 4:3 intermittent fasting group had a -7.6% change in body weight compared to -5% in the calorie restriction group," the researchers reported. "58% of those in the fasting group achieved weight loss of at least 5% at 12 months vs 47% in the calorie restriction group."

Despite planning for the groups to have an equal calorie deficit, researchers determined people on the 4:3 intermittent fasting diet actually ended up eating less, leading to higher weight loss.

Still, there are different schools of thought behind fasting's effectiveness, nutritionist



and dietitian Carrie Glassman told "CBS Mornings" on Tuesday.

"Many people and researchers that believe that the reason intermittent fasting works is because it's a simple way to restrict calories. Then there are researchers that say that it works because the body goes into this fasting mode, which helps you burn more fat and lose fat and lose more weight and also promote other health benefits," she said.

Plus, Glassman noted the exercise component is critical.

"Not just for weight loss, but actually to help maintain weight loss, exercise is always important," she said.

The study authors added that the fasting

method may be appealing for dieters who don't want to worry about counting calories every day. Still, weight loss between the groups varied, exposing the need for more research.

"Future studies should evaluate biological and behavioral predictors of response" to both diet plans, "to provide insight for personalization," the authors added.

Fasting is also not an option for everyone, Glassman warned.

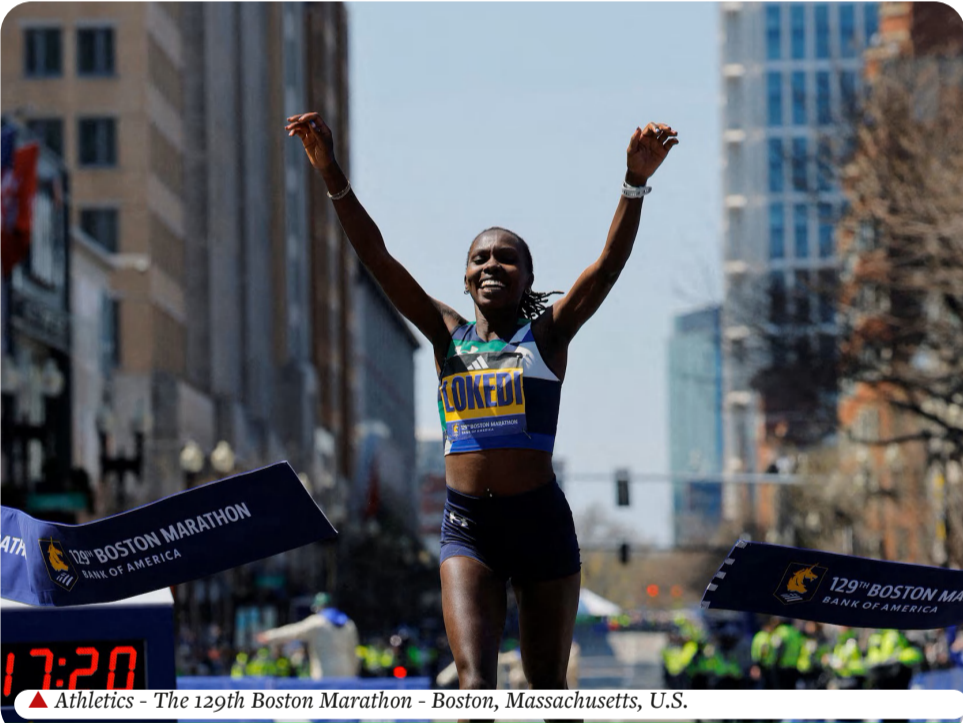
"It's not going to work for people with Type 1 diabetes, people with a history of eating disorders, people on certain medications (and) children," she said.

CBS Health

News in pictures



▲ Wild bluebells, which bloom around mid-April, turning the forest floor blue, form a carpet in the Hallerbos, also known as the 'Blue Forest', in Halle, near Brussels, Belgium.



▲ Athletics - The 129th Boston Marathon - Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.



▲ Detainees stand behind a fence at the Bluebonnet Detention Facility, where Venezuelans at the center of a Supreme Court ruling on deportation are held, in Anson, Texas.



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump salutes as he attends the annual White House Easter Egg Roll, in Washington.



▲ Faithful attend a Mass for Pope Francis at Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano, after the pontiff died, in Rome, Italy.

Motsepe delighted with Kaizer Chiefs' likely return to CAF

CONFEDERATION of African Football President Patrice Motsepe says he is happy Kaizer Chiefs are set to play in next season's CAF Confederation Cup.

Chiefs have reached the final of the Nedbank Cup final, and even if they lose to Orlando Pirates, it would take a complicated set of permutations for them fail to play in the 2025/26 edition of the Confederation Cup. Motsepe - 'I am proud'

"South African football requires a successful Chiefs and I am proud of the work the Motaung family are doing," said Motsepe, at the launch of the renewal of a partnership between CAF and Africa Global Logistics.

"Dr Kaizer Motaung is in a class of his own. I have said in the past that the days of success for Kaizer Chiefs are coming and ... I think they will be even more successful in the future'.

The CAF president was more reticent on whether he wants Mamelodi Sundowns (his former club) to face Orlando Pirates in the CAF Champions League final. Both teams will be in Cairo on Friday for the second leg of their semifinals.

'So good to see'

Both first legs ended in goalless draws.



▲ CAF president Patrice Motsepe was full of praise for Kaizer Chiefs.

"I am proud of all the teams from all over the continent," he said.

"It is so good to see two South African teams participating in the CAF (Champions League) semifinals ... sustainable progress doesn't happen overnight. It needs consistent in-

vestment and hard work. I wish the best Al Ahly, Pyramids, Pirates, who are my father's club, and Stellenbosh (Stellies are playing in the Caf Confederation Cup semifinals). What's the other team? And Sundowns!"

(The Citizen)

Concussion spurred on Coetzee's incredible form

IT may be a bit flippant to suggest a knock to the head changes things. Especially in the times of head injuries in rugby and its impact on the game over the past few seasons.

But for Vodacom Bulls loose forward Marcell Coetzee it really made a massive difference.

Coetzee was sidelined with a concussion earlier in the season, a startling wake-up call for a player who plays at 100 per cent, and when the symptoms didn't subside as quickly as possible, he had a scare.

There is more than enough evidence nowadays of the complicated results of head knocks in rugby players, and the studies that have gone on with it.

Back then, Coetzee said on the side of the practice field that he realised how many concussions he had during his career, and while there hadn't been one for a few years, it was a realisation that woke him up to the reality of the situation.

And while the medical team kept him on the sidelines for a few weeks more, it changed his outlook a bit for the game he loves dearly. A father now, his thoughts turned to other things, and the realisation filtered through that if he is in the last part of his career now, he needs to make it count.

There are few that have watched the Bulls over the past few weeks that would argue that he did just that. His form has been exceptional - and Coetzee has won a few man of the match awards hands down that it



wasn't even a contest.

Last weekend against Munster it was even more spectacular. A shift in workload that saw him make 31 tackles - that's a monster number in anyone's book. And when it came to dominant tackles - there were seven - an unbelievable number for a single player in a single game.

It has made it hard to ignore the form he is in at the moment, which has come at the right time for the Bulls after losing Elrigh Louw earlier in the season.

And Coetzee admits that the concussion was a big factor in his shift in form in recent weeks.

"The concussion was a tough one to take," he said.

"The symptoms lasted longer than we anticipated. It kind of gave me a scare - a reminder of how quickly this game can be taken away from you. It makes you humble, in a sense, and to appreciate every minute you get with the boys and game time as well.

"So I think I just transferred all

that energy towards enjoyment and fulfilling my service for the team. This tour has been really special and for me, it's just a big appreciation for the game."

Physical domination remains a key factor for the Bulls and they will want a similar shift going into the game against defending champions Glasgow Warriors this weekend. The stakes are high and the winner will likely finish second on the log - so there is more than enough to play for.

While Coetzee didn't entertain the war of words that has been going on ahead of the game, he did underline the importance of the fixture, and while he didn't say it, it is likely there will be a bit more needle after Glasgow's Grand Final win last season at Loftus Versfeld.

"It's going to be a tough task coming up against a quality Glasgow team but we're looking forward to the challenge," Coetzee said about the fixture.

(Supersport)

Kaizer Chiefs 'keeper wanted in France

KAIZER Chiefs' Rwandan goalkeeper Fiacre Ntwari is being targeted by a Ligue 2 side in France, according to a report from FarPost.

The 27 year-old signed for Amakhosi this season. But he has made just seven appearances in all competitions.

Chiefs' Ntwari doesn't play The Rwandan international has not featured at all since Chiefs' 4-0 Carling Knockout quarterfinal loss to Mamelodi Sundowns on November 2.

"There is a second division club from France, they also asked me about him," Rwanda head coach Adel Amrouche told FARPost.

Ntwari has remained a reg-

ular for Rwanda in their Fifa World Cup and Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers. Amrouche added that he had trust in Amakhosi. And he hopes Ntwari will play again before the end of the season.

'I trust the coaches'

"I trust the coaches at Chiefs, and I hope between now and June, he's going to get his chance to play again because we need him for the rest of the qualifiers," he said.

This may be a stretch given that Chiefs only have five games left before the end of the season. This includes two Soweto derbies against Orlando Pirates, in the Betway Premiership and the Nedbank Cup final. (The Citizen)



▲ Fiacre Ntwari has not played for Chiefs since November.

Former Brazil coach Tite taking break to take care of mental, physical health

FORMER Brazil coach Tite said he is taking an indefinite career break in order to take care of his mental and physical health. The 63-year-old, who led Brazil to the 2019 Copa America title, was hospitalised due to a heart issue last August.

He was sacked by Flamengo the following month and had most recently been linked with

the Corinthians job.

"I realised that there are times when you have to understand that, as a human being, I can be vulnerable and admitting that will certainly make me stronger," Tite said in a statement posted on his son Matheus Bachi's Instagram on Tuesday.

"I'm passionate about what I do and I'll continue to be so, (Reuters)



▲ Former Brazil coach Tite.

Guardiola joy as Man City go third after dramatic win over Villa

PEP Guardiola admitted his wild celebration of Matheus Nunes's stoppage-time winner against Aston Villa felt strange because Manchester City don't score as many late goals as their Premier League rivals.

Nunes fired City to a crucial 2-1 victory over top-five rivals Villa in the fourth minute of stoppage-time at the Etihad Stadium on Tuesday.

Guardiola responded to Nunes's composed finish from an acute angle by launching into a frenzied fist-pumping dance of joy including a primal roar that underlined the significance of the result.

City had been seconds away from a damaging result in the race to qualify for the Champions League via a top five finish.

But now they control their own fate with four games left in their turbulent league season, thanks to an unusual feeling of last-gasp success.

"We're not used to it. That belongs to Liverpool especially, how many times did they score late winners under Jurgen (Klopp) and Arsenal under Mikel (Arteta) as well? I'm not used to it, so I'm really, really happy," Guardiola said.

"Football is emotion. For the fans, players, we have a lot of pressure for the club to go to the Champions League.

"The players behave unbelievable. We are so pleased. We're in the last four games and we're a Champions League contender for qualification."

Nunes's first league goal for City came after Aston Villa striker Marcus Rashford converted a controversial penalty to cancel out Bernardo Silva's early opener.

Guardiola was booked for ranting at the fourth official after VAR intervened to call for a penalty after Ruben Dias made contact with Jacob Ramsey.

But, with time running out, City enjoyed a rare uplifting moment in a difficult campaign that will see them surrender the title they had won in the previous four seasons. **THE SEASON HAS BEEN BAD**

Guardiola will be happy with a top five berth in the circumstances this term.

"Aston Villa is a team to the last man, one of the top teams in Europe. But we played really good. We were aggressive in our duels, the back four was unbelievable," he said.

"Football if you're in this business to live with the disappointment. The performance was really good and we were able to do it.

"The season has been bad. The reality is what makes you feel good is the Premier League."

Seventh-placed Villa are now two points adrift of the top five with four games left.

It was a bitter blow after their agonising Champions League quarter-final exit against Paris Saint-Germain last week.

But boss Unai Emery called on his players to bounce back in Saturday's FA Cup semi-final against Crystal Palace at Wembley.

"We can't waste time, we lost in the last minute of this match, but we competed well. We were close to drawing," he said.



▲ Pep Guardiola reacts after Manchester City's late winner against Aston Villa.

"Over 90 minutes Man City dominated more, but we played a good competitive match.

"We can't waste time now, we have to keep going. We want to try keep the level that we're achieving and try to be demand-

ing in our way so we can build us stronger in everything.

"Tomorrow, rest. Thursday and Friday, positive and work hard to prepare for the game against Crystal Palace."

(Supersport)

Sinner doesn't deserve any hate, says Draper

BRITON Jack Draper has given his backing to world No 1 Jannik Sinner over the doping controversy which saw the Italian accept a three-month ban and said he does not deserve any of the hate he gets.

Sinner accepted the ban in February following a deal with the World Anti-Doping Agency, which had challenged a tribunal's decision to clear him after two positive tests.

The 23-year-old three-time Grand Slam champion has not played since winning the Australian Open in January.

"When people ask about him, or anyone, I'll tell the truth. I think Jannik is a really, really genuine, nice person," Draper told the Guardian and BBC in a joint interview published on Tuesday.

"In this situation I'm sure that he would have absolutely zero idea of anything. That's just the way life goes — sometimes there's mistakes.

"In terms of actually how I feel about him as a person, I think it's important for people to know and recognise that the guy's very, very kind-hearted and a good human being. So he doesn't deserve any of the hate that he gets."

World No 6 Draper, also 23, practised with Sinner at the Tennis Club de Beaulieu in France. Sinner was cleared to return to training from April 13.

"If you can train with anyone, it's got to be probably the best in the world, right? He's obviously had a bit of time off, but he's playing at an incredible level still," Draper said. (Reuters)



▲ Tennis player Jannik Sinner.



▲ Jose Maria Olazabal.

Olazabal named Europe's vice-captain for 2025 Ryder Cup

SPAIN'S Jose Maria Olazabal has been named as Europe's vice captain for the 2025 Ryder Cup, the team said on Wednesday.

The 59-year-old will join forces with captain Luke Donald to defend the title at Bethpage Black in New York from September 26-28.

Olazabal, a two-time Masters champion, has represented Europe in the Ryder Cup on seven occasions from 1987 to 2006 and was the last captain to lead the team to victory on American soil.

"It is wonderful news. When Luke ap-

proached me and asked me about the possibility of being a vice captain again, I have to be honest, I thought about it for a while because, you know, being in New York, it's not going to be easy," Olazabal said.

"The Ryder Cup is very close to my heart. I have wonderful memories about this event so I said yes."

Olazabal, who has participated in 31 matches across his seven Ryder Cup appearances, will be undertaking his fifth stint as Europe's vice-captain.

(Supersport)

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE PICK OF THE WEEK

By Chris Dlamini

THE biggest fixture on the land is upon us this weekend - a definite PICK OF THE WEEK for us and the hordes of local football fanatics.

It is one with no significance to the exciting title run-in that has been a three-horse race mainly for nearly a month now.

It is really a Mbabane Derby with bragging rights and pride at stake. Yes, the three points, if taken by either side, will be fulfilling to their supporters as they hope for a decent finish. It's Mbabane Swallows against Mbabane Highlanders - the latter's supporters had wanted it more after completing a double over Young Buffaloes. Their call was loud and clear on social media, particularly Facebook, and it was answered on match-day 22. It has come it is here, and all eyes will be on it on Sunday. It will be the only game on the day to enable the fans to focus on it. All the other fixtures, in respect of the biggest football toe domestically, will play on Saturday. This includes the title run-in fixtures, which are looking quite nothing but straight wins for the title chasers, at least on paper. Leaders Nsingizini Hotspurs will be up against an unpredictable Manzini Sea Birds, second-placed Royal Leopard are up against relegation-troubled Sisonkhe while third-placed Green Mamba will take on Madlenya who look set for relegation, come May.

A thriller for the fans! Mbabane Swallows vs. Mbabane Highlanders
Date: Saturday, April 26, 2025

Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini
Kick-off: 3pm

Revenge, pride, and bragging rights are the ingredients of this potentially explosive MTN Premier League capital city derby. The supporters of both sides also make up for what is expected to be a colourful day on the stands from both ends. Bring all these together, and an electrifying atmosphere can

be expected, a thriller. Inkunz'emnyama, as Highlanders are passionately known, must overturn the first round defeat, but Umkhonto KaShaka (Swallows) will not allow that. Highlanders will have to double up and fight as hard to earn their revenge. They can take the game to their hosts, who will certainly bring all the fire they can to win this fixture again. The fanfare in this matchup is interesting enough already, and it is not a surprise that this comes as a single

All eyes on 'Big Derby'

... as title run-in calms down a little



▲ Two of the country's biggest teams will meet this weekend.

header as per its status in domestic football. It just compares to no other. The big derby, which divides families and sees others fast and also shunning their food in reaction to this tie, has several other interesting factors about it. We highlight those in this article.

FIRST ROUND MEETING:

* Black and white giants Mbabane Highlanders were the hosts at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini, and lost narrowly with a 2-0 margin.

FIRST ROUND FIXTURE DATE, SCORE:

10/11/2024
M. Highlanders 0
M. Swallows 2

PREVIOUS MATCH RESULTS:

21/05/2025
M. Swallows 2 Rangers 1

21/05/2025
M. Highlanders 3
Illovo 3

HEAD-TO-HEAD 2023/2024:

10/12/2023
M. Swallows 1

M. Highlanders 1

05/05/2024

M. Highlanders 2

M. Swallows 3

Their Standings:

M. Swallows - 6th (34 pts)

M. Highlanders - 7th (27 pts)

Key Players:

M. Swallows

1. Njongo Mazibuko (Striker)

2. Sandanezwe Mathabela (Goalkeeper)

3. Bongi 'Karas' Magagula (Wing forward)

4. Kingsley Kwakyi (Centre-back)

M. Highlanders

1. Qiniso Nyawo (Goalkeeper)

2. Thando Langa (Central Defender)

3. Kenneth 'Moloto' Mashaba (Wing forward)

4. Siyabonga Mkhonto (Wing forward)

Make us proud — ESRC implores Athletics duo



▲ ESRC CEO Darius Dlomo, Athletics Eswatini President Zakhele Dlamini and marathon runners Mancoba Khumalo and Thobile Ngwenyama during the farewell function held at EOCGA offices.

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE Eswatini Sports and Recreation Council (ESRC) has implored two athletes Melusi Khumalo and Thobile Ngwenyama to make the country proud during the Iraq half marathon.

The two athletes will represent the country during the annual international race scheduled for April 27, 2025.

The seasoned sports administrator said this during a farewell function held on Wednesday at the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) offices.

“We urge the two to make us proud during the assignment so that you can entice the

Government to continue funding sports. You should make sure that you do finish below your personal best,” he said.

Dlomo also applauded the Athletics Eswatini executive committee for their effort to develop the sport in the country.

“We commend the good work done by Zakhele Dlamini and his executive committee by giving athletes international exposure. The executive committee efforts have played a major role in the significant growth of athletics in the country,” he said.

Athletics Eswatini president Zakhele Dlamini said the two athletes are ready for the race.

“We wish the two athletes the best of luck during the race confident that they will both perform to their full potential,” he said.

Thobile Ngwenyama’s personal best is 1.23s while Khumalo is at 1.08s.



▲ Eswatini Cue Sports Association President Muntu Dlamini and Secretary Mbongeni Gamedze during a recent ladies tournament.

ECSA going to the polls

By Chris Dlamini

IT is time to vote in the Eswatini Cue Sports Association (ECSA).

Outgoing Secretary Mbongeni ‘Mdlikiza’ Gamedze has made the announcement.

“It’s our Elective Assembly next month and we have invited all our affiliates,” said Gamedze.

He said a memo was already out to all affiliates being Manzini Regional Pool Association (MRPA), Hhohho Regional Pool Association (HRPA) and Lubombo Regional Pool Association (LRPA).

The assembly is scheduled for May 25 at Mahlanya Conference Room from 1pm.

Among the agenda of the day will be executive committee elections, financial and budget report as well as constitution amendments.

ECSA is currently led by Muntu Dlamini who has successfully, along with his execu-

tive committee, led Eswatini back into the international scene. He has seen young and senior players go overseas for competition, while also going continental.

“The term of office is four years,” confirmed Gamedze.

He added that the invite to affiliates extended to two representatives each, ‘especially the Chairman and secretary’. It is anticipated that the outgoing Muntu will also make his remarks to open the meeting.

The full agenda is listed in the article.

ECSA Elective Assembly agenda:

1. Opening prayer
2. Opening remarks by the president.
3. Reading and adoption of previous minutes - ECSA Secretary
4. Financial and budget report by Treasurer.
5. Report and upcoming events - Secretary General
6. Constitution amendments
7. Elections
8. Closing remarks - President

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE Eswatini Cricket Association (ECA) has thanked stakeholders and partners following the implementation of the Umpire Tutor’s course.

The three-day international course was held at Bethel Courts under the auspices of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The three-day course was facilitated by South African experts Sam Mokorosi and Lauren Agenberg.

“We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the International Cricket Council for making this opportunity possible. This course marks a significant step forward in strengthening the foundation of cricket officiating for the ICC members in the Southern Africa region,” the association said.

The local Cricket mother body also thanked Mokorosi and Agenbag for conducting the course.

“A special thank you to our incredible

Umpire Tutors Course a success — ECA

Master Educators, Tom Mokorosi and Lauren Agenbag for their exceptional delivery of the course. Your inclusive approach, unwavering support and ability to create a conducive and engaging learning environment did not go unnoticed. You have inspired the next generation of umpire tutors with your knowledge and passion,”

The Association further urged participants to implement their expertise within their respective countries.

“To all the candidates—thank you for your respect, dedication and eagerness to learn. Your commitment throughout the course was truly commendable. We wish you all the best as you begin your journey as Umpire Tutors. Congratulations on this achievement—your impact on the future of cricket in your respective countries starts now,” the association said.

The course was opened by Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council (ESRC) Business Development Manager Zama Tsabedze.



▲ ICC umpiring tutoring course participants during the opening ceremony held at Bethel courts.

EFA/Wanderers big meeting today

... Eswatini Football Association (EFA) keeps its promise as part of their undertaking before Judge Mumcy Dlamini to settle the matter out of court before May 31, 2025.

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE Eswatini Football Association (EFA) has kept its promise to resolve the Manzini Wanderers court case.

The mother body will meet on Thursday (May 24, 2025) with the 'Weslians' lawyers as part of their undertaking before Judge Mumcy Dlamini to settle the matter out of court before May 31, 2025.

A source close to the matter revealed that the meeting will take place at one of the offices in Mbabane.

"The two parties will be meeting on Thursday to negotiate terms of the out-of-court settlement. EFA has already assured Wanderers their premier league status for next season as part of the negotiations that will be discussed today,"

the source said.

The meeting comes after EFA lawyer Hlomla Mdladla successfully negotiated the possible contempt of court for EFA president Peter 'Samora' Simelane and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frederick Mngomezulu.

The two football administrators were accused of failing to comply with the September 27, 2024 order issued by Judge Mumcy Dlamini.

Judge Dlamini declared the 'Weslians' a Premier League team amid its dragging case over the May 19, 2024, match against Denver Sundowns defender Jimoh Moses.

Moses was found guilty of playing with a valid permit by Judge Dlamini after Wanderers lost the controversial match 4-2 and relegated from the Premier League at Somhlolo National Stadium.

Meanwhile, the Premier League of Eswatini have confirmed the



▲ Manzini Wanderers legal team addressing their supporters and officials after the Supreme court ruling.

payment of E38 260 in respect of the recent postponed court case legal costs at the High Court be-

fore Judge Mumcy Dlamini.

The top-flight football entity further committed itself to solving

the matter in a fair and transparent manner through a statement issued on Wednesday.



▲ Sambulo 'Masoso' Simelane with Thubelihle Mavuso.

'Golden Boot' race: 'Masoso's aims for gold

By Chris Dlamini

MTN Premier League leaders Nsingizini Hotspurs forward Sambulo 'Masoso' Simelane's goals may be worth more than just the Top Goal scorer Award.

The forward does not have the numbers to pose any threat to Green Mamba forward Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa who is leading with 17 goals. However, his current eight goals may go a long way for him and his club. He could hand them their first league title in only their third season in the top flight, earning the gold medal and a place in the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League. Simelane was on target on Easter Monday, netting the second in a 2-0 win over Ezulwini United. This was his third consecutive goal in three matches, and it ensured they took the summit for the first time in the club's history with a two-point

advantage. Police side Royal Leopard dropped to second after their 20-match unbeaten league

run was abruptly halted by Young Buffaloes with a 1-0 defeat. Meanwhile, also making the cut here is Manzini Sea Birds' Philani Mkhonto, who has seven goals, but his team was in a goalless draw against Green Mamba. Otherwise, the race is on, with five games to go.

MTN Premier League Top Goal scorer's Chart:

The Top 7 Goal scorers:

1. Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa (Green Mamba) - 17 goals
2. Phiwa Dlamini (Y. Buffaloes) - 11 goals
3. Junior Magagula (Royal Leopard) - 10 goals
4. Bhekani Mthembu (Ez. United) - 10 goals
5. Felix Badenhorst (Royal Leopard) - 9 goals
6. Philani Mkhonto (M. Sea Birds) - 7 goals
7. Sambulo 'Masoso' Simelane (Nsingizini Hotspurs) - 7 goals



▲ HRFA officials and Lactalis Manager Lucky Phiri during the press briefing held at Sigwaca House.

HRFA intensifies Cabana zonal preps

THE Hhohho Regional Football Association (HRFA) has intensified preparations for the Cabana Under 13 zonal finals.

The E200 000 sponsored Development Competition will be played in three zones Mbabane, Lobamba and Buhleni from May 3, 2025.

HRFA Head of Youth Development Ntokozo Tsela disclosed the news during a press briefing at Sigwaca House on Wednesday.

"We are pleased with our long-standing relationship with Lactalis and look forward to this year's edition to be played in three zones.

The winners will win themselves some prizes which include E1 5 00 cash first prize money and a brand-new kit," he said.

Meanwhile, Lactalis Marketing Manager Lucky Phiri pledged support towards the development initiative.

"We will continue to support the development program which is part of our commitment to give back to the community. We are happy with everlasting marriage with HRFA which has continued to grow strength to strength over the years," he said.

“We are pleased with our long-standing relationship with Lactalis and look forward to this year's edition to be played in three zones”



**Guardiola joy
as Man City
go third**

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**EFA/Wanderers big
meeting today**

● Eswatini Football Association (EFA) keeps its promise as part of their undertaking before Judge Mumcy Dlamini to settle the matter out of court before May 31, 2025. **Page 23**