



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III delivering his speech during the Sincephetelo MVA Fund Ingwenyama Cup 2024/25 Prize Presentation dinner at Mavuso Trade Centre.

Sipho Shongwe gets 50-year-imprisonment

● The court acknowledged the 7 years Shongwe spent in custody awaiting trial, factoring remission policies, the actual time to be served could be approximately 26 years and 4 months.

By Delisa Magagula

THE High Court has sentenced businessman Sipho Shongwe to 50 years in prison for orchestrating the contract killing of prominent businessman Victor Gamedze. The sentence was delivered following a comprehensive ruling, which detailed the planning and execution of what the court termed a gruesome and cold-blooded murder on Thursday at the High Court in Mbabane.

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Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE High Court has sentenced businessman Siphon Shongwe to 50 years in prison for orchestrating the contract killing of prominent businessman Victor Gamedze.

The sentence was delivered following a comprehensive ruling, which detailed the planning and execution of what the court termed a gruesome and cold-blooded murder on Thursday at the High Court in Mbabane.

Shongwe was found guilty of hiring a group of hitmen, Mbuso Ncaza Nkosi, Sandile Dzodzo Zikalala, and Simphiwe Tata Ngubane to carry out the assassination. The killing took place on January 14, 2018 at the Galp Filling Station in Ezulwini, in full view of the public.

The judgment highlighted that the murder was audaciously bold, sudden, and striking, and that it required a lengthy custodial sentence to serve as a deterrent to others.

“This was a premeditated contract killing, part of a common purpose. It was planned, well-executed, and intended to shock. Crimes of this nature are heinous, wicked, and morally offensive,” read the judgement.

The court noted the arrests of accomplices Ncaza and Ngubane in South Africa were facilitated through the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Protocol.

They were extradited to Eswatini after an investigation led by Detective Senior Superintendent Sikhumbuzo Fakudze, whose team presented extensive cellphone data, direct evidence, and circumstantial evidence linking Shongwe to the murder.

In establishing precedent, the Court cited South African legal standards, where individuals found guilty of hiring assassins

Siphon Shongwe sentenced to 50 years for Victor’s assassination



▲ Siphon Shongwe has been sentenced to 50 years imprisonment for the murder of Victor Gamedze. His sentence is backdated to his date of arrest in 2017.

in premeditated murders often face life sentences. It was found that Eswatini’s jurisprudence is in alignment with these standards.

“There is no doubt in casu that the jurisprudence in Eswatini is in the main compatible with the South African jurisprudence. The planning and manner of execution justify the harshest sentence under the law,” the court stated.

Policies

Although the sentence is 50 years, the Court acknowledged that remission policies may reduce the total time to be served. Shongwe is entitled to a one-third remission in accordance with correctional services procedures, potentially reducing the sentence by 16 years and 8 months.

Additionally, the court acknowledged the 7 years Shongwe spent in custody awaiting trial. Factoring in these reductions, the actual time to be served could be approximately 26 years and 4 months.

The court dismissed pleas for leniency from Shongwe’s defence, which included mitigation submissions and testimony by a clinical psychologist.

However, the presiding judge ruled that individuals who engage in contract killings “do so at their own risk and peril” and must face the consequences.

“The interests of justice and society are prime in this matter,” the judge said, emphasizing that sentencing must reflect the seriousness of the offence and provide closure to the public.

“This crime perpetrated against the deceased Victor Gamedze was morally and extremely offensive. I run short of words to describe the evil nature of his death.”

... Court brands Gamedze murder ‘a heinous contract killing’

THE High Court has described the murder of Victor Gamedze as a ‘heinous’ ‘shocking’, and ‘morally offensive’ crime carried out in a calculated, public assassination.

The ruling confirmed that Gamedze was murdered by hired assassins acting on instructions from convicted mastermind Siphon Shongwe. The court concluded that the murder was not only deliberately premeditated, but also intended to instil fear in the public.

“It would be in the best interest of justice that an appropriate sentence commensurate with the contract killing be imposed in order to serve as a deterrence,” reads the ruling.

The judge referenced international studies and historic assassinations to emphasize the psychological impact of public killings.

Examples included the assassinations of U.S. President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which the judge said left a permanent mark on public consciousness.

Similarly, the court said the death of Gamedze, a household name in Eswatini, has had a lasting effect.

“The public remembers vividly of the horrific brutal assassination of Victor Gamedze as if it happened yesterday.”

The Court stressed that justice in high-profile public assassinations must serve more than just legal punishment; it must deliver societal closure.

This, the judge said, could only be achieved through a fair, just, and proportionate sentence.

“Such murders or assassinations always leave a lasting horrific impression on

those who witnessed it and equally on those who did not witness it but heard of it,” the judge said. The murder was planned with elaborate and sophisticated preparation, and carried out in a manner that the court described as brazen.

Evidence presented during trial pointed to Shongwe’s central role in financing and arranging the hit, including his communication with the assassins.

Cellphone records

Detective Senior Superintendent Sikhumbuzo Fakudze led a probe that exposed deep communication trails via cellphone records, as well as direct testimony and surveillance footage.

The court praised the thoroughness of the investigation and the cooperative legal efforts between Eswatini and South African authorities.

The judgment also cited legal precedent, including the Loyiso Ludidi & Others v The State case, to underline that proportionality



▲ Siphon Shongwe conversing with authorities at the High Court of Eswatini whilst awaiting sentence.

in sentencing is a constitutional right, but that the severity of the crime warranted a harsh penalty.

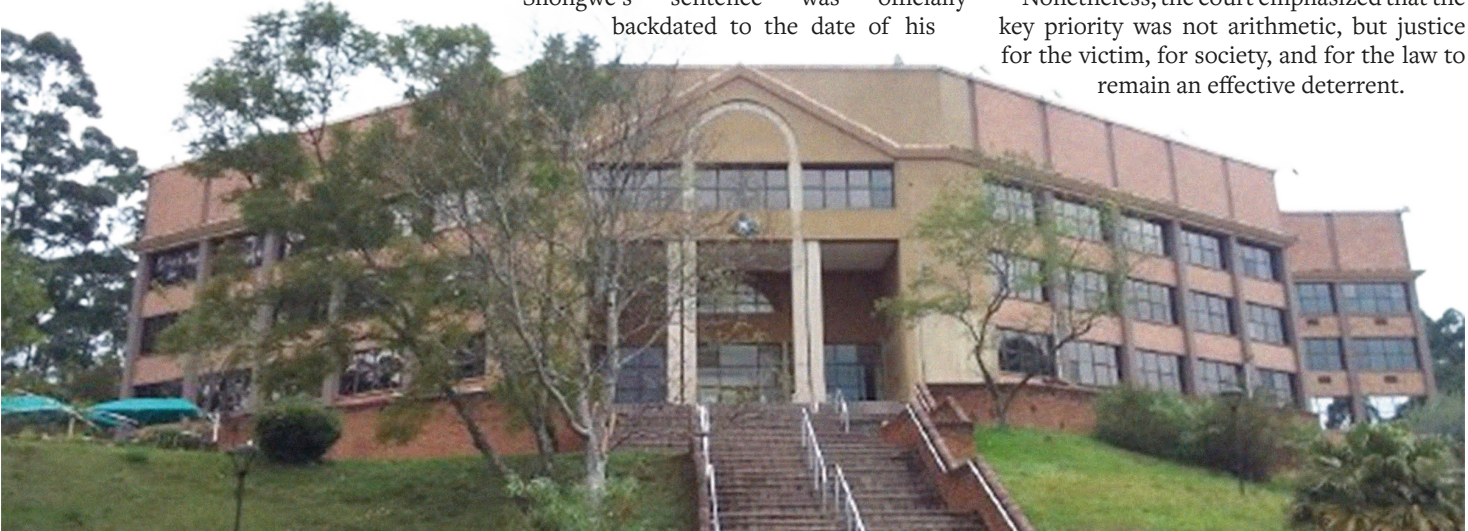
“When people engage in premeditated contract killings, they do so at their own risk and peril,” the judge concluded.

Shongwe’s sentence was officially backdated to the date of his

arrest, meaning the seven years spent in custody are recognized in the computation of his time behind bars.

Considering the one-third remission rule and time served, his actual prison time may total around 26 years.

Nonetheless, the court emphasized that the key priority was not arithmetic, but justice for the victim, for society, and for the law to remain an effective deterrent.





▲The event was attended by Inkhosikati Make LaMagongo, HRH Princess Qethuka, Emazinyane, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Senator Pholile Shakantu and High Commissioner Thandazile Mbuyisa.

Prince Shiyumcwasho, Princess Sibusezweni graduate in UK

By EDN Reporter

HIS Royal Highness Prince Shiyumcwasho graduated with a Bachelor of Civil & Infrastructure Engineering BEng(Hons) from Kingston University in the United Kingdom. The graduation ceremony took place at The Rose Theatre in Kingston upon Thames on 22 July 2025, where the prince received his degree before a gathering of family members, academic staff, and fellow graduates. Her Royal Highness Princess Sibusezweni has graduated with a Bachelor of Arts

in Global Management specializing in Marketing from Regent's University, London on the 30th July 2025. The ceremony took place at the stunning St Marylebone Church, blending tradition with the excitement of a new beginning for Princess Ezwe and her fellow graduates. The graduation ceremonies of HRH Prince Mcwasho and HRH Princess Ezwe was a memorable celebration of achievement, marking the beginning of a promising chapter for the young Prince and Princess. The event was attended by Inkhosikati Make LaMagongo, HRH Princess Qethuka, Emazinyane, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Senator Pholile Shakantu and High Commissioner Thandazile Mbuyisa.

Buckswood School Director Mr Giles Sutton acknowledged His Majesty's vision and wisdom in posing to educate Emazinyane overseas - just as he was. He said: "It takes courage to send your children far from home. But it also takes foresight - to see that learning how the world works is the first step in learning how to change it." The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation congratulated Prince Shiyumcwasho and Princess Sibusezweni on behalf of His Majesty King Mswati III. She said: "We are very proud to be celebrating this remarkable milestone in the life of Prince Mcwasho and Princess Ezwe. Education serves as a fundamental key that unlocks doors to countless opportunities

and deepens one's understanding of the world. The education you have both earned will empower you to develop critical thinking and leadership skills which are essential for navigating complex societal challenges to contribute meaningfully to the nation." Prince Mcwasho speaking on behalf of himself and Princess Ezwe thanked His Majesty for encouraging them to pursue education and for giving them the opportunity to study overseas. He thanked all friends and family who have supported them throughout their academic journey and those who travelled to attend their graduation ceremonies.



▲Buckswood School Director Mr Giles Sutton with Prince Mcwasho and Princess Ezwe at their graduation dinner.



Eswatini Financial Times

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By Siphesihle Dlamini
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THE Eswatini Agriculture Development Fund (EADF) has made significant strides in empowering agribusinesses across the nation, with a remarkable total of E32 million disbursed since its inception.

This initiative aims to transform the agricultural landscape of Eswatini, positively impacting the lives of many emaSwati. At the recent Inception Workshop for the third cohort of beneficiaries, Minister of Agriculture Mandla Tshawuka expressed his satisfaction with the increasing interest from emaSwati in the Fund.

He stated, “We are pleased with the overwhelming interest that emaSwati have shown in requesting support from the Fund. It shows that emaSwati are determined to work. It also shows the significance of targeted funding in the development of the agricultural sector.”

EADF has been a beacon of hope for many aspiring agribusiness owners, providing them with the necessary financial support to kickstart or expand their agricultural ventures. The latest cohort includes 16 beneficiaries who are set to receive a combined E21 million in loans. This substantial financial backing is expected to significantly enhance their agricultural enterprises, fostering growth and sustainability in the sector.

Minister Tshawuka emphasised the importance of commitment among all beneficiaries, both past and present. He urged them to focus not only on repaying the loans but also on ensuring the sustainability of their projects. “Our focus is not only on seeing the loans being repaid but also on ensuring the sustainability of your projects,” he remarked, highlighting the dual objective

EADF disburses E32 mln, empowering agribusinesses across Eswatini



▲ The initiative aims to transform the agricultural landscape of Eswatini, positively impacting the lives of many emaSwati. At the recent Inception Workshop for the third cohort of beneficiaries, Minister of Agriculture Mandla Tshawuka expressed his satisfaction with the increasing interest from emaSwati in the Fund.

of the Fund.

The EADF’s approach is rooted in the belief that targeted funding can catalyse the growth of the agricultural sector, which is vital for the economic development of Eswatini. By providing financial resources

to agribusinesses, the Fund aims to create a ripple effect that will benefit the broader economy, create jobs, and improve food security in the nation. The agricultural sector continues to evolve, and the EADF remains committed to supporting

innovative and sustainable practices among its beneficiaries. The Fund not only provides financial assistance but also offers mentorship and training programs to equip agribusiness owners with the skills needed to thrive in a competitive market.

Minister of Health; We’re aware that some health officials own pharmacies but – Minister declares

By Thokozani Mazibuko

MINISTER of Health Mduuzi Matsebula has addressed a series of pressing concerns raised by senators regarding drug shortages, health worker conduct, staff shortages, and perinatal deaths in the country’s health facilities.

Speaking during the Ministry of Health Senate Portfolio Committee sitting on Tuesday, Minister Matsebula acknowledged the challenges facing the sector but assured lawmakers that his ministry was actively working to resolve them.

Responding to allegations that some health professionals are exploiting the system by owning pharmacies while still working in public service, the Minister said investigations were underway.

“We have received reports to the extent that some health officers double as employees and at the same time own pharmacies,” Matsebula said. “We have instituted investigations, but these people connivingly register these companies in different names... not theirs.”

He admitted there is a need to overhaul the current system used for drug stock-outs

and distribution, which has been blamed for the persistent lack of essential medicines in clinics and hospitals.

“There is a need to come up with a system to resolve the stock-out and stock-take in the distribution of drugs and medicines, which continues to cause public outcry,” he said.

Despite the concerns, Matsebula insisted that drug supply to health centres has improved significantly, and he invited senators to accompany him on inspection visits to see the improvements firsthand.

“There is improvement in the distribution of drugs to health centres and clinics. I challenge Senators to come with me to see for themselves that the situation has improved,” he added.

He also addressed the issue of perinatal deaths, stating that in many cases, these are not caused by a lack of medication but rather delays in patients seeking medical attention.

“Perinatal deaths sometimes are not caused by the shortage of drugs, but most of the time, pregnant people visit hospitals late,” the Minister explained.

On the matter of expired drugs discovered in some facilities, Matsebula clarified that the expired stock was not recently purchased but had been sitting in storage for over a decade.

“The expired drugs were not bought recently but have been there since 2008. We also do benchmarking with other countries

to find solutions on how to monitor and prevent drug expiry,” he said.

He further pointed out that the Ministry of Health has established a Medicine Regulatory Authority to ensure only safe and approved medications are supplied to health facilities.

Turning to human resource issues, the Minister expressed concern over the limited number of new hires in the ministry, stating that while 480 positions were needed, only 92 were filled — a decision made outside his ministry’s control.

“On the issue of only employing 92 instead of 480, as a Ministry, we have no control over this matter as another ministry handles that,” he said.

Matsebula concluded by highlighting a worrying trend: the ongoing exodus of healthcare workers seeking opportunities abroad, which continues to leave the ministry severely understaffed.

“Health employees are leaving the country every month, thus causing them to be understaffed in the ministry,” he noted.

As Eswatini grapples with critical health sector challenges, the Senate Portfolio Committee sitting shed light on key weaknesses while also outlining the efforts underway to restore public confidence in the health system.



▲ Minister of Health Mduuzi Matsebula.

By Thokozani Mazibuko

Stakeholders call for increase of FPE grant



▲ The stakeholders further called for the standardisation of feeding times in schools.

A CALL for the increase of Free Primary Education (FPE) grant to enhance the school feeding scheme has been made. The call was made by different stakeholders on Thursday during the Systems Approach for Better Education Results in School Feeding (SABER-SF) two-day workshop held at The Gorge Hotel.

The SABER-SF assessment is led by the ministry of education and training, with technical support from an international consultant engaged by World Food Programme (WFP), and in close collaboration with colleagues from the WFP Eswatini Country Office and from the WFP Regional Office.

This collaborative approach underscores the spirit of partnership and country ownership that is so critical to the success of school meals programmes.

The increase of the FPE grant according to the different stakeholders, which included amongst others, schools’ principals, ministry of education and training officials and Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) amongst others, is to allow schools to have enough money for maintenance.

The stakeholders further called for the standardisation of feeding times in schools. “Schools that provide breakfast should have lunch at 1pm and those without breakfast should have lunch at between 10:30 and 11am,” said the stakeholders.

The stakeholders also called for the escalation of nutrition education in schools through empowering school feeding focal teachers on nutrition, who will then educate the school community on production and preparation of meals. They pointed out that such teachers should be given a stipend for this work.

The stakeholders further called for the empowerment of school administration on procurement, especially on local one (procurement).

In addition, they called for the development of standard kitchens that are all inclusive and allows for the preparations of same meals as well as special meals for children with allergies.

It was also the stakeholders’ call that schools administrators should be trained on sustainable farming practices and use of safe fuel for meal preparation.

Furthermore, they called for the implementation of a training programme for all personnel involved in the school feeding programme.

They also called for the development of a risk-based approach in the management of food supply. Meanwhile, the Schools Manager Lungelo Nhlengethwa, who represented the Principal Secretary in the ministry Nanikie Mnisi during the workshop, said as

a ministry, they were pushing for pupils to have meals three times a day.

He pointed out that there was a time where pupils were receiving two meals a day; however, the food had to be reduced to one meal per day due to financial constraints.

He urged all the stakeholders to work collaboratively with the ministry in ensuring that their goal of providing three meals per day to the learners was achieved.

Hunger Crisis Deepens:

72% in low-income countries can’t afford healthy diets – WHO report

By Thokozani Mazibuko



THE World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that over 544.7 million people in low-income countries amounting to 72% of the population were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2024.

The report, released this week, underscores a worsening global food insecurity crisis and calls for urgent international action.

“Food is a basic right, not a luxury,” the report emphasizes, shining a spotlight on the dire consequences of rising food prices, economic instability, conflict, and climate change on the world’s poorest populations,” WHO states in the report.

The WHO explains that a “healthy diet” includes a balanced intake of essential nutrients from a variety of food groups. Yet for the majority in low-income nations, the cost of such a diet far exceeds their daily income. In some regions, the price of nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, dairy, and lean proteins remains prohibitively high compared to starchy staples.

It should be noted that the affordability crisis is not merely about hunger it is about malnutrition in all its forms.

“Millions are not just going to bed hungry; they’re consuming diets that lack the vi-

tamins and minerals needed to live healthy, productive lives,” the report warns.

Moreover, according to the organisation, inadequate nutrition is directly linked to stunted growth in children, weakened immune systems, higher rates of disease, and lower school performance.

It is worth mentioning that for adults, the consequences are equally alarming decreased productivity, vulnerability to illness, and a continued cycle of poverty.

The report also highlighted that the gender gap remains significant, with women and girls being disproportionately affected by food scarcity and rising costs.

The WHO has urged governments, do-

nors, and international organizations to scale up support for food systems that are sustainable, affordable, and equitable.

According to the WHO, this includes investing in local agriculture, subsidizing nutritious foods, expanding social protection programs, and mitigating the effects of climate change on food production.

In addition, the report encourages high-income countries to support global food aid efforts and to revise trade policies that might worsen food insecurity in vulnerable regions.

In the report, The WHO further points out that in countries like Eswatini, which rely heavily on imported food and have limited agricultural capacity, the impact is particularly severe.

In earlier reports in the Media, the Civil society organizations and local leaders called for a coordinated response to strengthen food systems and prioritize nutrition in national development plans.

It is worth mentioning that the WHO’s findings are a clear reminder that access to food is a fundamental human right, not a privilege.

“With more than half a billion people unable to afford a healthy meal, the global community faces an urgent moral and humanitarian obligation: to act swiftly, decisively, and with compassion,” the organisation has pointed out.



DPM brings hope to vulnerable families in Shiselweni 1, Sigwe constituencies

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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DEPUTY Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla officially handed over four newly constructed two-roomed houses to families in Shiselweni 1 and Sigwe Constituencies, offering them not just shelter but renewed hope.

This initiative marks a significant step in the government's efforts to uplift vulnerable communities and provide them with the necessary support to improve their living conditions. In her visit to Shiselweni 1, the Deputy Prime Minister first met with the Vilakati family, comprising Thandeka and Mxolisi Vilakati and their six children. The family had previously been living in a leaking, thatched hut that had sustained considerable damage during the heavy rains earlier this year.

To provide temporary protection, a tent was set up over their fragile home. The handover of a new house represents a monumental improvement in their living conditions, allowing the family to live in safety and comfort.

The emotional impact of this initiative was palpable as DPM Dladla visited Gogo Gladys Ntjengase, an 80-year-old resident of Shiselweni 1. Gogo Ntjengase's previous home collapsed in January 2025, leaving her in a precarious situation. Overcome with



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla and one of the woman she handed over the house to.

emotion during the handover ceremony, she expressed her deep gratitude and admitted that she had initially doubted the DPM's promise of assistance during her earlier vis-

it. The new home not only shelters her but also restores her faith in the support offered by the government. Moving to Sigwe Constituency, the DPM met with the Nxumalo

family, led by Gogo Josphinah Ndlovu. The family, which includes her daughter-in-law, Nomcebo Nxumalo, and four sons, had been living in a dilapidated structure riddled with cracks and holes.

Their previous living conditions posed significant risks, including exposure to dangerous snakes, which led them to frequently call for community assistance. The new home offers them a haven, alleviating their fears and providing them with a sense of security.

The last family to receive a new home was that of Ndoda and Dwana Simelane, who are raising nine children in a single, deteriorating room. The DPM had first visited them in January 2025 and, through the Asibambaneni Sibengumndeni reality programme, played a crucial role in reuniting the family by locating the father, who had been away for three years seeking employment.

In addition to their new home, the Simelane family is set to receive goats, indigenous chickens, fencing, and a solar energy system, further supporting their sustainability and self-sufficiency.

During the handover events, Deputy Prime Minister Dladla also distributed food parcels, including rice and noodles, along with essential household items such as basins to all the families. This gesture not only addresses immediate needs but also demonstrates the government's commitment to holistic support for vulnerable households.

Help police locate these missing girls

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service are seeking out assistance from the members of the public after several women went missing.

According to the notice, Sakhile Temlababa Nyawo of Moyeni (Siteki) went missing from home in September 2023. She has not been found yet.

The REPS is appealing for information that may assist in locating Promise Mngometulu, a missing teenage girl who was last seen on Monday, 21 July 2025.

"She was reportedly leaving home to go visit her father in Mbabane, but has not been seen since. At the time of her disappearance, Promise was wearing a pair of blue jeans, a white T-shirt, and black sneakers. She is described as fair in complexion, medium build and short," read the notice.

The police have revealed that an investigation into her disappearance has since been



▲ The Royal Eswatini Police Service are seeking out assistance from the members of the public after several women went missing.

opened by Matsapha Police.

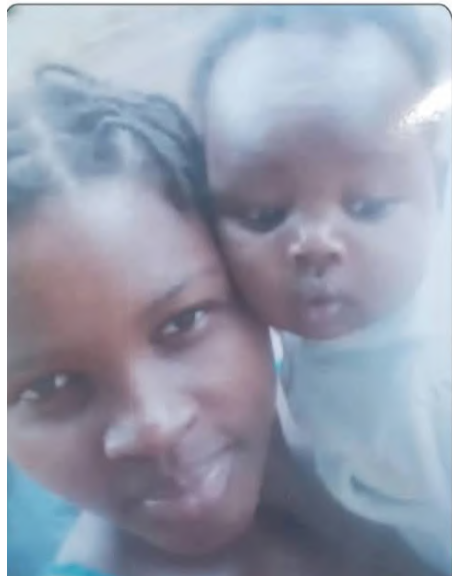
Meanwhile, the REPS has also launched an urgent investigation into the disappearance of a 20-year-old woman and her 6-month-old baby, who were last seen during the first week of July.

The Police say the young mother and her



daughter reportedly left home at Ekuthuleni and have not been heard from since.

These cases now forms part of the #REPS' broader campaign #FacesWeMustFind, a national initiative aimed at raising the profile of missing persons' investigations and gathering public support in locating those unac-



counted for. According to REPS, efforts are currently underway to establish the circumstances surrounding their disappearance as they are working tirelessly to trace their whereabouts and are appealing to the public to assist in the investigation.

"If you know of their whereabouts or have any information about their location, please contact Police on 2431 6010/999/9999, WhatsApp line at 7999 1000," the notice read.

BRIEFS

Microsoft poised for \$4 trillion valuation

MICROSOFT is set to soar past \$4 trillion in market valuation for the first time on Thursday, as a blockbuster earnings report helps the tech behemoth become the second company after Nvidia to surpass the milestone. The software company forecast a record \$30 billion in capital spending for the current fiscal first quarter and reported booming sales in its Azure cloud computing business on Wednesday.

Trump issues blitz of tariff

U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday issued a blitz of tariff announcements ranging from changes to previously threatened levies on imports of copper, goods from Brazil and South Korea, to ending an exemption from tariffs for small-value shipments from overseas. The wave of announcements came as the clock ticked down toward an August 1 deadline for higher U.S. tariff rates, as Trump presses on with his bid to reshape global trade.

Vodacom wins appeal in compensation case

SOUTH Africa's Vodacom Group on Thursday secured a ruling from the country's Constitutional Court to overturn a lower court's decision regarding compensation owed to a former employee for his role in developing its call-back messaging service. The Constitutional Court of South Africa set aside the Supreme Court of Appeal's judgment and sent the matter back to the court to be re-heard by a different panel of judges. (Reuters)

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.3824	17.8497
G.B. Pound	23.6308	24.3058
EURO	20.4230	21.0330
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E20.20/Litre	
Diesel	E19.80/Litre	
Paraffin	E14.55/Litre	



Cooperatives hold more than E3.5 bln in assets

Stories By Delisa Magagula

COOPERATIVES in Eswatini now hold assets exceeding E3.5 billion, with the sector playing a growing role in driving inclusive economic growth, financial access and community development.

This was revealed by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Honourable Manqoba Khumalo, during the 2025 International Day of Cooperatives commemorations held in Manzini.

The event marked a national celebration of the cooperative movement's contribution to the economy and to achieving the country's broader development goals.

The theme for this year's celebration, 'Cooperatives: Driving Inclusive and Sustainable Solutions for a Better World' was officially announced by the minister, aligning Eswatini with the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives.

The theme also resonates with key global platforms, including the Second World Summit for Social Development and the UN High-Level Political Forum.

In his address, Minister Khumalo shared key figures underscoring the cooperative movement's economic footprint.

According to him, Eswatini's cooperatives collectively hold assets above E3.5 billion, with members now being part-owners of institutions that are not only growing but also delivering tailored financial solutions. "These are not just enterprises, they are people-driven institutions that put community before competition and dignity before profit," said the Minister.

A significant portion of the cooperative sector's activity is centered around Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS). These institutions provide thousands of Emaswati with accessible financial services, often in areas underserved by traditional banking systems.

Through SACCOS, members have accumulated savings valued at over E2.6 billion. This growing pool of savings, the minister said, is enabling individuals and families to plan and invest in their futures with dignity.

In addition, loans issued through SACCOS have now exceeded E3 billion. These funds are being channelled into a range of areas, including:

- **Education support:** Helping members finance school fees, tertiary education, and

... Driving financial inclusion across Eswatini



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo during the 2025 International Day of Cooperatives.

training.

- **Housing development:** Allowing families to build or improve homes.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Providing capital to start or expand businesses.
- **Personal advancement:** Supporting the general welfare and development of members across the country.

"These tailored services continue to enhance financial inclusion, promote dignity and improve livelihoods across all corners of our society," Minister Khumalo said.

According to the ministry, the cooperative movement is not only contributing to household welfare but also presenting growing investment opportunities.

Minister Khumalo said that cooperatives are actively revitalising local economies, providing a stable model that stands firm in the face of rising global inequality, climate challenges, and economic uncertainty.

"The cooperative model is a proven model of resilience, they are not just part of the solution they are the solution," he said.

With over E3.5 billion in assets, E2.6 billion in savings, and more than E3 billion circulating in loans, the cooperative sector is emerging as a significant player in Eswatini's financial landscape.

The government views this model as central to expanding financial access, especially in rural and semi-urban communities. The

minister also extended gratitude to development partners who continue to support the growth and professionalisation of the cooperative movement in the country.

Deutsche Genossenschafts- und Raiffeisenverband (DGRV) A German cooperative and credit union organisation providing technical support, governance training, and capacity building.

Taiwan ICDF, Taiwan's International Cooperation and Development Fund, which supports youth-focused initiatives and the digital transformation of cooperative structures.

Minister Khumalo noted that both DGRV and Taiwan ICDF have played a critical role in strengthening cooperative governance and expanding access through digital platforms.

Beyond financial metrics, cooperatives are also advancing inclusion and empowerment goals. According to the ministry, cooperatives are opening access to financial products for women, supporting agricultural development, and creating employment pathways for young people.

"Youth empowerment is no longer a policy slogan. It is being implemented through cooperative enterprise," Khumalo said.

He also cited farmer cooperatives that are now enabling access to inputs, markets, and credit for rural producers, helping to improve food security and boost rural incomes.

The government reaffirmed its

commitment to the cooperative movement as part of Eswatini's broader strategy for inclusive development.

With a focus on digitization, governance reform and youth-led enterprise, the ministry said the sector would continue to be supported through policy and technical interventions.

The ministry plans to continue tracking cooperative performance, reporting annually on savings and lending activity, governance improvements, and membership growth.

Current projections suggest continued growth in the value of savings and the total loan book, which may surpass E4 billion in the next few years if current trends hold. As of 2025, cooperatives in Eswatini are no longer small-scale, peripheral players in the national economy. With assets now exceeding E3.5 billion, savings of E2.6 billion, and loans surpassing E3 billion, they are helping Emaswati build resilience, invest in education, and improve household security.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade says this year's theme reflects the cooperative movement's power to offer concrete, scalable solutions to some of the country's toughest development challenges.

"We acknowledge and celebrate all those who are shaping and strengthening the Cooperative landscape in Eswatini and beyond," Minister Khumalo said.

Eswatini to modernize investment climate with new Trade promotion bill

By Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) has taken a decisive step toward overhauling the country's investment landscape, unveiling a new Investment and Trade Promotion Bill during a high-level stakeholder consultation at Sibane Sami Hotel in Ezulwini.

Addressing business leaders, policymakers, and development partners, EIPA emphasized that the proposed legislation is set to replace the outdated Swaziland Investment Promotion Act of 1998, which no longer meets the demands of today's global economic environment.

The bill, which has been in the pipeline through a multi-stakeholder consultative process, is designed to reflect current international trade standards and align with Eswatini's obligations under global economic agreements.

According to EIPA, the legislation aims to streamline and modernize how the country attracts and manages both local and foreign investments, while also strengthening export capabilities.

"This consultation marks a significant milestone in our journey toward economic transformation and sustainable development," the EIPA representative said in remarks delivered on behalf of the CEO Sibani Mngomezulu.

"This is not just a legal document; it's a strategic tool to position Eswatini as a competitive, transparent, and investor-friendly economy," he said.

The law proposes major structural reforms aimed at creating a unified and agile system for trade and investment promotion. At the heart of this bill is a move to reduce bureaucracy, improve investor access, and consolidate institutional roles into a single coordinated framework.

Since the enactment of the 1998 Investment Promotion Act, the global economic terrain has shifted significantly. Eswatini has signed numerous international conventions and trade agreements, and EIPA says the current legal setup simply hasn't kept pace.

"The 1998 Act has been found wanting, particularly in terms of aligning with progressive international trade and investment regimes. We must now adapt or risk falling behind," EIPA noted.

The proposed bill not only repeals the older act but introduces provisions that address the long-standing pain points of doing business in Eswatini.

These include regulatory delays, overlapping mandates, and a lack of coordination among government agencies. The new bill will give EIPA greater clarity of purpose and tools to support investors efficiently.

EIPA was quick to point out that this legislative reform is part of a larger national effort to improve the ease of doing business. Notably, the country has already made strides under its Investor Roadmap initiative, which has helped streamline business licensing, company registration, and other administrative processes.

"While progress has been made, we recognize that we must continuously evolve to remain competitive in a fast-changing global economy. This Bill is part of that evolution,"



▲The stakeholders during the meeting.

the representative said.

The bill is supported by Eswatini's broader investment policy, and aims to foster inclusive growth by deliberately supporting the participation of youth and women in economic activity.

EIPA also stressed the importance of aligning the law with the country's overarching national development goals, particularly those outlined in the Government Programme of Action.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the day was EIPA's strong emphasis on consultation. Stakeholders were urged to critically examine the bill and offer frank, practical feedback.

The agency made it clear that it views stakeholder input not as a procedural formality, but as a foundational part of policy-making.

"Your insights are not just welcome they are essential. We are here to listen, to understand your concerns, and most importantly, to incorporate your expertise and experiences into a law that is fit for purpose," the CEO's representative told attendees.

Participants at the consultation included representatives from business support organizations, private sector leaders, and policy experts, many of whom have previously called for legal clarity and predictability in the country's investment framework.

EIPA also touched on the bill's potential to boost investor confidence by offering clear legal guarantees and institutional stability. The goal, according to the agency, is to build a rules-based environment where businesses can plan, invest, and grow with confidence.

"It's about sending a clear message to the global investment community: Eswatini is open for business and serious about creating a level playing field," the representative said.

In its closing remarks, EIPA extended gratitude to development partners, government ministries, and the private sector for their continued support in shaping this bill.

"We are the implementing agency for investment and trade policy, supported by the



▲SMEs Director Meluleki Dlamini.

Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Trade. But this cannot be done in isolation. It will take coordinated action and continued collaboration," said the representative.

Following the consultation, EIPA will compile stakeholder input and finalize the draft legislation before it is presented to the appropriate legislative bodies.

The agency is hopeful that the bill will be passed into law within the current fiscal year. For now, the focus remains on building consensus.

"As we consult, let us ensure that the final outcome reflects the aspirations of the private sector, supports inclusive participation, and positions Eswatini on a clear path to high-income status," said the EIPA representative.

With pressure mounting for economic reform and private sector growth, all eyes will be on how this legislation evolves and how swiftly it moves from consultation to implementation.

Microsoft poised for \$4 trillion valuation after solid results

MICROSOFT is set to soar past \$4 trillion in market valuation for the first time on Thursday, as a blockbuster earnings report helps the tech behemoth become the second company after Nvidia to surpass the milestone.

The software company forecast a record \$30 billion in capital spending for the current fiscal first quarter and reported booming sales in its Azure cloud computing business on Wednesday.

Shares of Microsoft were up 8.5% at \$557.03 in early premarket trading, valuing it at \$4.14 trillion.

Redmond Washington-headquartered Microsoft first cracked the \$1 trillion mark in April 2019.

Its move to \$3 trillion was more measured than other tech giants, Nvidia and Apple with AI bellwether Nvidia tripling its value in just about a year and clinching the \$4 trillion milestone before any other company on July 9. Apple was last valued at \$3.12 trillion.

Lately, breakthroughs in trade talks between the U.S. and its trading partners ahead of President

Donald Trump's August 1 tariff deadline have buoyed stocks, propelling the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq to record highs.

Microsoft, the second largest U.S. company, has rebounded nearly 50% from its April 2025 lows, when global markets were rattled by Trump's tariff offensive.

Microsoft's multibillion-dollar bet on OpenAI is proving to be a game-changer, powering its Office Suite and Azure offerings with cutting-edge AI and fueling the stock to more than double its value since ChatGPT's late-2022 debut.

Armed with exclusive access to OpenAI's models, Microsoft has raced to the front of the generative AI pack - supercharging its Azure cloud business, now the company's top revenue driver, and solidifying its dominance in the tech landscape, compared to Google's cloud and Amazon's web services.

Wall Street's surging confidence in the company comes on the heels of back-to-back record revenues for the tech giant since September 2022.

The stock's rally had also re-



▲ The software company forecast a record \$30 billion in capital spending for the current fiscal first quarter and reported booming sales in its Azure cloud computing business on Wednesday.

ceived an extra boost as the tech giant trimmed its workforce and doubled down on AI investments — determined to cement its lead as businesses everywhere race to harness the technology.

While sweeping U.S. tariffs had investors bracing for tighter business spending, Microsoft's strong earnings have shown that the company's books are yet to take a hit from the levies. (Reuters)

Trump issues blitz of tariff announcements on copper, Brazil, South Korea imports

U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday issued a blitz of tariff announcements ranging from changes to previously threatened levies on imports of copper, goods from Brazil and South Korea, to ending an exemption from tariffs for small-value shipments from overseas.

The wave of announcements came as the clock ticked down toward an August 1 deadline for higher U.S. tariff rates, as Trump presses on with his bid to reshape global trade.

Capping a day that began with Trump announcing a 25% tariff rate on goods from India, after months of negotiations between Washington and New Delhi failed to produce a trade deal, Trump said a 50% tariff on cop-

per pipes and wiring would kick in on Friday.

Trump plans to sign new executive orders on Thursday imposing higher tariff rates on several countries that have been unable to reach negotiated trade deals with the United States, Politico reported, citing a White House official.

Details of the copper levy fell short of the sweeping restrictions expected and left out copper input materials such as ores, concentrates and cathodes.

The surprise move dragged down U.S. copper prices more than 17% on the Comex exchange and unwound a premium over the London global benchmark that had grown in recent weeks, with shipments diverted there in anticipation of higher domestic prices.

(Reuters)

Vodacom wins appeal in call-back service compensation case

SOUTH Africa's Vodacom Group on Thursday secured a ruling from the country's Constitutional Court to overturn a lower court's decision regarding compensation owed to a former employee for his role in developing its call-back messaging service.

The Constitutional Court of South Africa set aside the Supreme Court of Appeal's

judgment and sent the matter back to the court to be re-heard by a different panel of judges.

The court found a number of "fatal shortcomings" in the appeal court's judgment issued last year.

Earlier the telecoms operator said it would comment after it had gone through the court's ruling.

(Reuters)



▲ The software company forecast a record \$30 billion in capital spending for the current fiscal first quarter and reported booming sales in its Azure cloud computing business on Wednesday.

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Zuckerberg signals Meta won't open source all of its 'superintelligence'

META CEO Mark Zuckerberg shared his vision on Wednesday for "personal superintelligence," the idea that people should be able to use AI to achieve their personal goals.

Smuggled into the letter is a signal that Meta is shifting how it plans to release AI models as it pursues "superintelligence."

"We believe the benefits of superintelligence should be shared with the world as broadly as possible," wrote Zuckerberg. "That said, superintelligence will raise novel safety concerns. We'll need to be rigorous about mitigating these risks and careful about what we choose to open source."

That wording about open source is significant. Zuckerberg has historically positioned Meta's Llama family of open models as the company's key differentiator from competitors like OpenAI, xAI, and Google DeepMind. Meta's goal has been to create open AI models that were as good as or better than those closed models. In a 2024 letter, Zuckerberg wrote, "Starting next year, we expect future Llama models to become the most

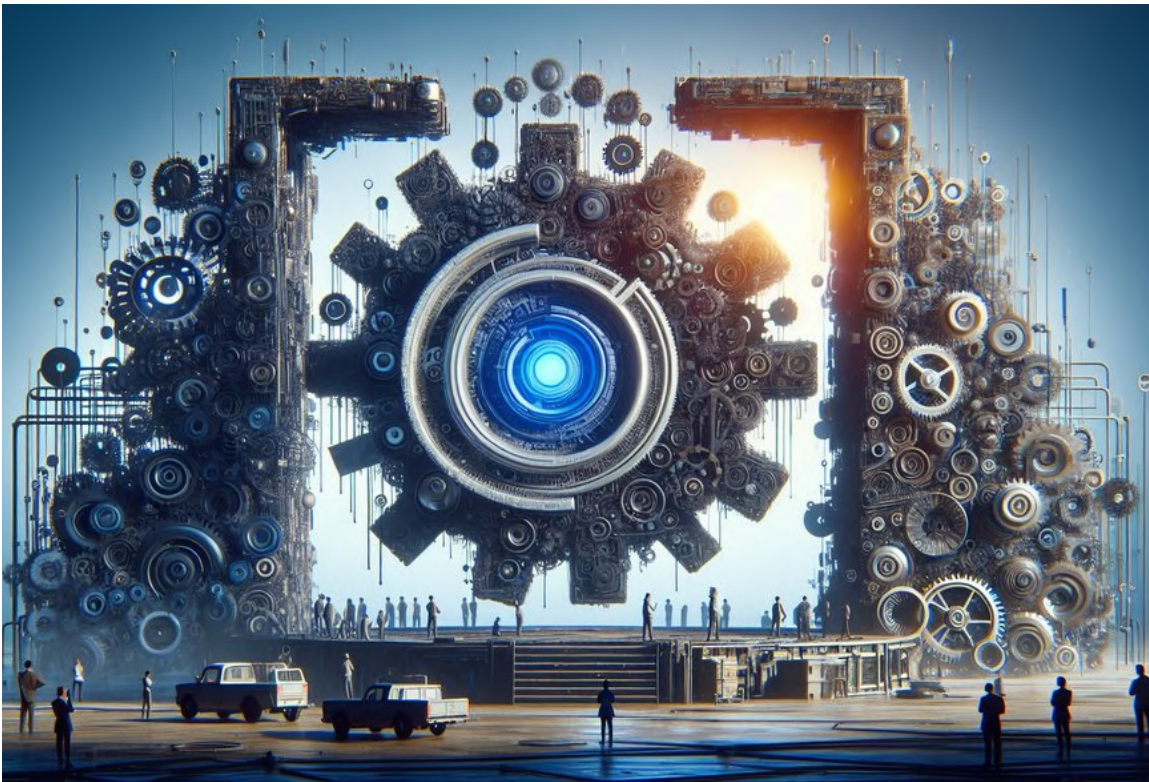
advanced in the industry."

Zuckerberg has previously left himself room to maneuver on this commitment. "If at some point however there's some qualitative change in what the thing is capable of, and we feel like it's not responsible to open source it, then we won't," he said in a podcast last year.

And while many say Llama doesn't fit the strict definition of open source AI — partly because Meta hasn't released its massive training datasets — Zuckerberg's words point to a possible change in priority: Open source may no longer be the default for Meta's cutting-edge AI.

There's a reason why Meta's rivals keep their models closed. Closed models give companies more control over monetizing their products. Zuckerberg pointed out last year that Meta's business isn't reliant on selling access to AI models, so "releasing Llama doesn't undercut our revenue, sustainability, or ability to invest in research like it does for closed providers." Meta, of course, makes most of its money from selling internet advertising.

Still, that stated viewpoint



▲ Smuggled into the letter is a signal that Meta is shifting how it plans to release AI models as it pursues "superintelligence."

on open models was before Meta started to feel like it was falling behind competitors, and executives became obsessed with beating OpenAI's GPT-4 model while developing Llama 3.

Cut to June 2025, when Meta began its public AGI sprint in earnest by investing \$14.3 billion in Scale AI, acquiring Scale's founder and CEO, and restructuring its AI efforts under a new unit called

Meta Superintelligence Labs. Meta has spent billions of dollars to acquire researchers and engineers from top AI firms and build out new data centers. (TechCrunch)

How 2 UC Berkeley dropouts raised \$28M for their AI marketing automation startup

AI-POWERED marketing automation startup Conversion, founded five years ago by two UC Berkeley dropouts, has raised a \$28 million Series A led by Abstract, with participation from True Ventures and HOF Capital.

The company's founding story sounds like it could have been an episode of the HBO show "Silicon Valley."

The story begins all the way back when co-founder and CEO Neil Tewari, now 24, was in high school. He got busted one day watching a TechCrunch Disrupt livestream during class, was sent to the principal's office, and had to stay late.

Afraid to call his parents and tell them why they had to pick him up, he instead called one of their close friends. On the drive home, Tewari explained to the friend what got him in trouble. "I told him I had this interest [in entrepreneurship], and four years later, he was actually the first person to write us a check into the company," Tewari told TechCrunch.

James Jiao, Tewari's college roommate at Berkeley — now Conversion's co-founder and CTO — also dreamed of founding his own company, so the two tried building various products, like one for helping marketers buy product placement ads. They stumbled on the idea for Conversion when they signed up for HubSpot to help them



▲ Conversion's founding story sounds like it could have been an episode of the HBO show "Silicon Valley."

with marketing tasks and decided to build a few extra automation features to layer on top of it.

"It was originally for us," Tewari said of his startup's tech. The co-founders enjoyed building their internal marketing tool so much, they wondered if they could sell it and began reaching out to marketing executives for "customer discovery" interviews.

"We actually spent like two

months doing like 160 customer interviews with VPs of marketing, 50- to 500-employee businesses, and got a much more positive response than we could have imagined," Tewari said.

Marketing teams had these tools deeply embedded in their workflows, but everyone had similar complaints about the parts they couldn't automate.

(TechCrunch)



Google is experimenting with machine-learning powered age estimation tech in the U.S.

GOOGLE is testing a machine-learning-powered tech in the U.S. to determine the age of users and filter content across all its products accordingly.

The company said it will consider data from Google accounts, including types of details users have searched for or categories of videos they have watched on YouTube, to determine the age. If the company's tool decides that a user is under 18, they would get an email with details about how Google products might change for them.

For these users, Google will disable the timeline in Maps, stop personalized ads, restrict age-restricted ad categories, and bar them from accessing adult-themed apps on the Play Store. The company will

also turn on digital wellbeing features on YouTube, such as break reminders and "go to bed" notifications when consuming videos late at night. Plus, it will prevent underage users from accessing certain kinds of content — such as content that could trigger body image issues — repeatedly.

If users think they have been tagged as an underage account by mistake, they can appeal the decision and prove their age using a photo of their government ID or a selfie.

Google rolled out similar measures for YouTube earlier this week, and now the company is experimenting with machine-learning-based age gating in the U.S. for Google accounts at large.

(TechCrunch)

Nigerian nurses strike for pay and staffing as talks collapse

NURSES in Nigeria's public hospitals began a seven-day "warning" strike on Wednesday, demanding improved remuneration, better working conditions and increased recruitment, after a two-week ultimatum to the government expired without resolution.

The National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) warned that if their demands are not met by next week, the union will embark on an indefinite strike, the first in over two decades.

"We hope that before the seventh day, we'll have attention and positive response from the federal government," said Christianah Adeboboye, head of the nurses' and midwives' union in Lagos.

A meeting on Tuesday between the union and a government delegation led by Labour Minister Muhammad Dingyadi ended in a stalemate.

"When you look at the composition of the meeting, it already shows that no outcome could have been gotten out of that meeting," said Toba Odumosu, union secretary in

Lagos, citing the absence of Health Minister Ali Pate as a critical gap.

The impasse underscores the growing rift between healthcare workers and the government, leaving patients vulnerable as hospitals brace for further disruptions.

The union is pushing for the recruitment of more nurses, pointing to a sharp decline in personnel as over 42,000 nurses have left Nigeria for jobs abroad in the past three years, according to the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria.

(Reuters)



▲ A view of the Unit of the medical service of National Orthopaedic Hospital, as Nigerian nurses begin strike over poor support from government in Lagos Nigeria.

Angola says death toll from protests rises to 22

ANGOLA'S government said on Wednesday that the death toll from violent protests against a fuel price hike had risen to 22 from the previous day's estimate of four.

The unrest broke out on Monday when minibus taxi associations launched a three-day strike against a government decision to increase the price of diesel by one-third, part of efforts to curb costly subsidies and shore up public finances.

Looting, vandalism and clashes with police started in the capital Luanda, then spread to other provinces.

President Joao Lourenco's cabinet met on Wednesday and received an update on the security situation and police response.

A presidency statement said there had been 22 deaths, 197 people injured and 1,214 arrests. Sixty-six shops and 25 vehicles had been vandalised, and some supermarkets and warehouses looted, the statement said.

Angola has been gradually removing fuel subsidies since 2023, when a petrol price hike also triggered deadly protests, encouraged by the International Monetary Fund among others.



▲ The unrest broke out on Monday when minibus taxi associations launched a three-day strike against a government decision to increase the price of diesel by one-third, part of efforts to curb costly subsidies and shore up public finances.

Subsidies amounted to as much as 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) last year, according to the Southern African oil-producing country's finance minister.

Investors are closely watching the drive to phase out subsidies.

Pieter Niesten, portfolio manager for emerging market debt at Neuberger Berman, told Reuters that fuel subsidies were estimated to account for 1.8% of GDP this year, contributing to fiscal pressures.

(Reuters)

SA readying last-minute trade offer to avoid US tariff

SOUTH Africa is preparing a last-minute "enhanced" trade proposal at the urging of U.S. officials in hopes of avoiding a 30% tariff which kicks in on Friday, its trade minister said on Thursday. South Africa initially submitted a proposed trade deal to President Donald Trump's administration in May and revised it in June, but received no response.

"We're having to navigate a last-minute proposal that's enhanced from the proposal that we had initially given," Trade Minister Parks Tau said on South Africa's 702 radio, adding: "And to tell the truth, it's wait and see."

The countdown to the August 1 deadline has stirred fear and uncertainty in South Africa, where the central bank governor has estimated a 30% U.S. tariff would put 100,000 jobs at risk, with the agriculture and automotive sectors hit hardest.

The U.S. is South Africa's second-largest bilateral trading partner after China. South Africa

exports cars, some manufactured goods, citrus fruits and wine to the U.S.

Tau said South Africans spoke to U.S. officials on Wednesday night, both at the level of Washington's embassy in Pretoria and also the U.S. trade representative, but uncertainty lingered on what would happen as the tariff deadline approached.

"They (said) they would encourage us to resubmit our proposal, possibly an enhanced proposal, to the United States government," Tau said.

A top South African diplomat said on Tuesday that U.S. demands on domestic affirmative-action policies were complicating efforts to secure a trade deal.

Bilateral relations have been strained by South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies to address the legacy of centuries of racial inequality and its genocide case against Israel at the World Court, which Israel and the U.S. vehemently oppose.

(Reuters)



▲ South African Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Parks Tau, speaks during a press conference, in Washington, D.C., U.S.

Kenyan court orders exhumations in suspected cult-related deaths

A Kenyan court has ordered the exhumation of bodies suspected to belong to people who were starved and suffocated in the same county where hundreds of members of a doomsday cult were found dead two years ago, prosecutors said on Wednesday.

The bodies in the new case are believed to be buried in shallow graves on the outskirts of Malindi in southeastern Kenya's Kilifi County, and 11 suspects are being investigated, Kenya's Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions said on X.

"Investigators suspect multi-

ple individuals were murdered through starvation and suffocation," it said.

"The victims may have been starved and suffocated as a result of adopting and promoting extreme religious ideologies."

More than 400 bodies were exhumed from the nearby Shakahola Forest in 2023 in one of the world's worst cult-related disasters in recent history.

In that case, prosecutors have alleged that cult leader Paul Mackenzie ordered his followers to starve themselves and their children to death so that they could go to heaven before the world ended. (Reuters)

Are Trump tariffs authorised by emergency powers – Judges

U.S. appeals court judges sharply questioned on Thursday whether President Donald Trump’s tariffs were justified by the president’s emergency powers, after a lower court said he exceeded his authority with sweeping levies on imported goods.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, D.C., is considering the legality of “reciprocal” tariffs that Trump imposed on a broad range of U.S. trading partners in April, as well as tariffs imposed in February against China, Canada and Mexico.

In hearing arguments in two cases brought by five small U.S. businesses and 12 Democratic-led U.S. states, judges pressed government lawyer Brett Shumate to explain how the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), a 1977 law historically used for sanctioning enemies or freezing their assets, gave Trump the power to impose tariffs. Trump is the first president to use IEEPA to impose tariffs.

The judges frequently interrupted Shumate, peppering him with a flurry of challenges to his arguments.

“IEEPA doesn’t even say tariffs, doesn’t even mention them,” one of the judges said.

Shumate said that the law allows for “extraordinary” authority in an emergency, including the ability to stop imports completely. He said IEEPA authorizes tariffs because it allows a president to “regulate” imports in a crisis. The states and businesses challenging the tariffs argued that they are not permissible under IEEPA and that the U.S. Constitution grants Congress, and not the president, authority over tariffs and other taxes. Neal Katyal, a lawyer for the businesses, said the government’s argument that the word “regulate” includes the



▲ US President Donald Trump.

power to tax would be a vast expansion of presidential power, Katyal said.

The arguments - one day before Trump plans to increase tariff rates on imported goods from nearly all U.S. trading partners - mark the first test before a U.S. appeals court of the scope of his tariff authority.

Policy

The president has made tariffs a central instrument of his foreign policy, wielding them aggressively in his second term as leverage in trade negotiations and to push back against what he has called unfair practices. Trump has said the April tariffs were a response to persistent U.S. trade imbalances and declining U.S. manufacturing power.

He said the tariffs against China, Canada

and Mexico were appropriate because those countries were not doing enough to stop illegal fentanyl from crossing U.S. borders. The countries have denied that claim.

Shumate cited a 1975 appeals court decision that authorized President Richard Nixon’s across-the-board surcharge of 10% on imported merchandise to slow inflation. But that decision added that the president did not have authority to impose “whatever tariff rates he deems desirable.”

Shumate also said that courts cannot review a president’s actions under IEEPA or impose additional limits that are not included in the law. Several judges said that the argument would essentially allow one law, IEEPA, to overwrite all other U.S. laws related to tariffs and imports. **Reuters**



▲ Demonstrators from communities affected by a \$1.6 billion Panama Canal project to build a massive new water reservoir in Panama protest as community representatives introduce a lawsuit before the Supreme Court asking it to declare the project unconstitutional.

Panama communities challenge canal expansion project

COMMUNITIES in Panama affected by a \$1.6 billion project by the Panama Canal to build a massive new water reservoir on Thursday introduced a lawsuit before the Supreme Court asking it to declare the project unconstitutional, **Coordinadora Campesina por la Vida** representing farmers said.

The canal, a key global freight channel, has said the project to build a reservoir in the Rio Indio is essential to expand its operations and manage its water resources, after a recent drought in 2023 and 2024 forced it to limit transits. “We want it to be understood that the Canal has not done things right, that the Rio Indio project be stopped and that a process of dialogue be opened,” Santander Tristan, a lawyer for the communities, said in court. According to canal authority data, approximately 2,500 people could be impacted by the project. The groups’ suit alleges that the project would violate the constitution in six different ways, including disregard for international human rights and environmental treaties to which the country is a signatory. It also alleges the canal authority failed to conduct a prior consultation with the communities affected. **Reuters**

Zelenskiy, moving to defuse crisis, restores power of anti-graft agencies

PRESIDENT Volodymyr Zelenskiy restored the independence of Ukraine’s two main anti-corruption agencies on Thursday, moving to defuse a political crisis that has shaken faith in his wartime leadership and worried Western partners.

Thousands of protesters rallied in Kyiv and other cities in recent days in a rare show of discontent after lawmakers led by Zelenskiy’s ruling party rushed through amendments last week defanging the respected agencies.

Zelenskiy reversed course after the outcry, under pressure from top European officials, who warned that Ukraine was jeopardising its bid for European Union membership by curbing the powers of its anti-graft authorities.

He signed a new bill on Thursday shortly after lawmakers approved it 331 to 0, saying the legislation “guarantees the absence of any kind of outside influence (or) interference”.

“Ukraine is a democracy - there are definitely no doubts,” Zelenskiy said on the Telegram messaging app.

Thursday’s law reverses amendments that had given his hand-picked general prosecutor the power to transfer cases away from the agencies and reassign prosecutors, a step critics alleged had been designed to protect his allies from prosecution.

Eradicating graft and shoring up the rule of law are key requirements for Kyiv to join



▲ Protesters hold placards during a rally ahead of a vote in parliament on Thursday, in which lawmakers will consider restoring the independence of two key anti-corruption agencies, amid Russia’s attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

the EU, which Ukrainians see as critical to their future as they fend off a Russian invasion.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen described Thursday’s law as “a welcome step” and urged Ukraine to

continue its reform drive.

PUBLIC PRESSURE

Popular demonstrations had continued even after Zelenskiy submitted the new

bill last week, with hundreds rallying near the presidential offices in Kyiv late on Wednesday chanting “Shame!” and “The people are the power!”.

Ukrainians, following a night of deadly Russian air strikes, also rallied near parliament ahead of Thursday’s vote to pressure lawmakers to approve the new measure.

After it passed, they burst into cheers and applause.

“Some fight on the front, and some need to put them (authorities) in their place here,” said demonstrator Mykola Pominchuk, 42.

Speaking at the rostrum before voting, opposition member Yaroslav Yurchyshyn thanked Ukrainians for stopping authorities “one step from the abyss” of autocracy.

Some lawmakers appeared in parliament with handmade placards mimicking those carried by protesters.

CORRUPTION FIGHTERS

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAPO) have stepped up a closely watched campaign against graft since Russia’s February 2022 invasion.

They have brought charges against lawmakers and senior government officials, including a then-deputy prime minister who was accused last month of taking a \$345,000 kickback. **Reuters**



By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival weekend is here, promising a delightful celebration of culinary arts and vibrant culture.

Savour the mouthwatering aromas from diverse food stalls, engage in interactive workshops, and explore a marketplace filled with local crafts. With lively music and performances setting the stage for entertainment, this weekend offers fun for all ages, making it the perfect opportunity to indulge in delicious flavours and create lasting memories with friends and family. Enjoy every moment of this exciting festival.

►► **STANDARD BANK LUJU FOOD & LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL**
When: Friday and Saturday
Where: House On Fire
Fee: E850

Excitement is in the air as the Standard Bank Luju Festival is here. The 7th edition of the Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival is set to take place on August 1-2, 2025, promising to once again transform the landscape of Eswatini into a vibrant celebration of culture and creativity. This year's festival carries the compelling theme, "A Return to the African Future," which encapsulates a profound message of reclaiming pre-colonial heritage while simultaneously celebrating contemporary African identity. Attendees are invited to explore the cultural significance of African cuisine and design, uncovering the stories and traditions that have shaped the continent's history and continue to inspire its future. In line with this theme, the culinary focus for the festival, titled "Forgotten Seeds," pays tribute to indigenous practices that resonate with the rhythms of nature. By reviving ancestral knowledge and promoting biodiversity, the festival aims to champion food sovereignty and economic empowerment, effectively bridging the gap between traditional wisdom and modern innovation.

►► **LOVE AFFAIR**
When: Friday
Where: Mdzimba View Shisanyama
Fee: E150

Talented South African Amapiano stars Mhaw Keys and Russell Zuma have confirmed that they are set to take the stage at Mdzimba View Shisanyama. The pair will headline the highly anticipated 'Love Affair' event on August 1, 2025, starting at 6 pm and continuing into the late hours. The event will not only feature Mhaw Keys and Russell Zuma but will also showcase an impressive lineup of local DJs who are sure to keep the crowd dancing all night long. Among the supporting acts are Zulu D, Sgitha, Lady Zee, Ayacity, and Sbu De Drum DJ, with Sintour taking on the role of MC for the evening. Tickets for the event are priced affordably to ensure that everyone can join in the fun. General admission will be E150 if purchased in advance, while entry at the gate will cost E200. For those looking to elevate their experience, VIP tickets are available for E300 presale and E350 at the gate.

►► **BIG BEND SCHOOLS CLOSING**
When: Friday
Where: Gamula Community Hall
Fee: E30

South African musician Frans CEO is gearing up for an electrifying performance at the Gamula Community Hall for the much-anticipated "Big Bend Schools Closing" event. Scheduled for August 1, 2025, this celebration marks the end of the school year and promises a



Honey-sweet Luju weekend!

night filled with music and entertainment. The event will feature a stellar lineup of local talent, including Snapking, Zweli The Vocalist, Criss Tino, Mr. Sey, Shodi & Pepe, and the Ndzevane Arts Group. Tickets are affordably priced at E20 for students, E30 for adults, and E40 at the gate, making it accessible for all community members. Born Frans Umgcabo Ngobese in Kwa-Thema Springs, Frans CEO's journey to becoming a musician is both inspiring and poignant. After the tragic loss of his mother at the tender age of 12, he relocated to Newcastle to live with his grandmother. This significant life change marked the beginning of his artistic exploration, as he sought solace in music during a challenging time.

►► **WINTER BREAK**
When: Friday
Where: Scanza Bar
Fee: Free

South African musician Mduduzi Ncube is gearing up for an electrifying performance at the "Winter Break" event, scheduled for August 1, 2025, at Scanza Bar in Siphofaneni. This highly anticipated show is set to be a night of unforgettable music and entertainment, featuring a lineup of talented artists including Samu Once Again, Charlie Bee, and Raizor Womdanso. The event will be hosted by the charismatic comedian Gedlembane, and best of all, entry is free. Mduduzi Ncube, best known for his hit single 'Isiginci', has captivated audiences with his powerful voice and heartfelt lyrics.

His music resonates deeply with fans, drawing from his personal experiences and struggles. In an exclusive interview with Sowetan, Ncube opened up about his tumultuous journey to stardom, revealing the challenges he faced along the way, including his battle with addiction.

►► **3-STEP NIGHT WITH OBSESSION**
When: Saturday
Where: Espinho Restaurant & Bar
Fee: E50

3 Step Night with Obsession is set to entice fun lovers and music enthusiasts alike, promising an unforgettable experience filled with vibrant sounds and electrifying performances. Scheduled for August 2, 2025, the event will take place at the popular Espinho Restaurant & Bar, running from 3 pm until late into the night. The lineup for the evening is impressive, featuring a mix of talented artists including Obsession, Lord F, Dual Force, Russell, Acoustic Soul, Shauzy, and Mshayi. The event will be hosted by the charismatic MC Sintour, ensuring that the energy remains high throughout the night. With an entry fee of just E50, attendees can expect a night of entertainment that is both affordable and exhilarating. In an exclusive interview, Obsession shared his excitement about the upcoming event and the inspiration behind it. "This event is inspired by the fast-growing new wave of the 3 Step sound," he explained. "With the sound gaining momentum, I was approached by Espinho Entertainment manager DJ Mfundo Kool Swazi to do a

show there. The concept, A Night of 3 Step with Obsession, is still going to other venues, but we decided to start at Espinho, one of the hottest hangout spots currently on the land."

►► **SUNDAY SOUL COOKOUT**
When: Sunday
Where: Brussels Lounge
Fee: Free

South African music is set to echo through the walls of the Brussels Lounge in Manzini as talented DJ Judy Jay takes centre stage for an electrifying performance on August 3, 2025. The event, aptly titled the 'Sunday Soul Cookout,' promises to be a celebration of music, culture, and community, kicking off at 2 pm. With entry to the event free of charge, attendees can look forward to an afternoon filled with rhythm and soul. Judy Jay, born Judy Mahlatji, has quickly established herself as a prominent figure in the music industry since her debut in 2017. Her journey is a remarkable story of talent, determination, and resilience. Over the years, she has captivated audiences with her unique sound and dynamic performances, earning her a dedicated fan base across the continent. The upcoming performance at Brussels Lounge will feature an impressive lineup of supporting acts, including The Bishop, Cnatra, Cup, Bandora, Slotta, Fantasy, Mafaka, and Lady Zee, among others. Each artist brings their flair, ensuring that the event will be a showcase of diverse musical talent that appeals to a wide range of tastes.

As 4 Jerry P lands first international gig

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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AS 4 Jerry P, a talented musician from Eswatini, has made a significant leap in his career by securing his first international gig.

This milestone marks an exciting chapter for the artist, who is set to headline the 1st Annual Spring Fest on September 27, 2025, at the Mabone Garden Pub & Grill. The announcement has generated considerable buzz among fans and the local music community, as As 4 Jerry P has become a prominent figure in the Eswatini music scene. Known for his distinctive sound, which blends traditional Swazi elements with contemporary influences, the artist has garnered a loyal following both locally and internationally. In a recent interview, As 4 Jerry P expressed his enthusiasm and gratitude for the opportunity to perform on an international stage. “It’s a dream come true to share my music with global audiences. I’m excited to connect with fans worldwide and showcase Swazi culture,” he stated. His words reflect the aspirations of many artists from the region who seek to promote their heritage through music.

The significance of this international show extends beyond personal achievement; it represents a broader opportunity for the Eswatini music industry. As 4 Jerry P highlighted the importance of international performances for brand growth, he noted, “International shows are a huge opportunity for my brand to grow and reach new fans. It allows me to share my unique sound and perspective with diverse audiences, promoting cultural exchange and understanding.” The 1st Annual Spring Fest is expected to attract a diverse crowd, providing a platform for various artists



to showcase their talents. As 4 Jerry P’s participation is particularly noteworthy, as he aims to represent his culture and heritage globally. “To emaSwati, I promise to proudly represent our culture, heritage,

and values on the global stage. I’ll strive to make you proud, sharing our story and music with the world, while staying true to my roots and community,” he assured his fans.



Shepard Brothers to rock Luju Festival

THE highly anticipated Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival is set to take place on August 1-2, 2025, at the iconic House On Fire in Eswatini, and the Eswatini group Shepard Brothers are preparing to take the stage.

This year’s festival promises to be a spectacular celebration of music, food, and culture, with Shepard Brothers poised to be one of the standout acts. Renowned for their unique sound that seamlessly blends deep house rhythms with soulful melodies, Shepard Brothers are ready to captivate audiences at the Luju stage. Their performances are characterised by an infectious energy that resonates with fans, making them must-see artists at this year’s festival.

The Luju Festival, now in its seventh edition, has established itself as a premier event that showcases the best of talent and culinary experiences in the region. This year, the festival aims to elevate its offerings, creating a dynamic atmosphere that reflects the rich cultural tapestry of Eswatini and beyond. The commitment to celebrating diverse musical genres and cultural expressions is evident in the impressive array of performers announced.

The second artist drop unveiled a lineup that includes local favourites such as Sands, Ayacity, and Ndumz, alongside notable South African acts like Jazzworx, Thukuthela, Andile Yenana, and the soulful Nomfundo Moh. This diverse selection of artists not only highlights the festival’s dedication to showcasing a wide range of musical styles but also emphasises the importance of collaboration and unity within the African music scene.

The Luju Festival has become synonymous with vibrant performances, delicious food, and a celebration of culture, drawing crowds from across the region. Attendees can expect to indulge in a culinary journey featuring local delicacies and international cuisine, enhancing the overall festival experience. In addition to the music and food, the Luju Festival offers a platform for local artisans and businesses to showcase their products, further enriching the cultural experience. This commitment to supporting the local economy and promoting Eswatini’s unique heritage is a cornerstone of the festival’s mission.

Eswatini film ‘A Dream’ heads to FestacAfrica

LOCAL film, “A Dream (Liphupho),” produced by Ayeye Entertainment, has garnered significant recognition by being officially selected for the esteemed FestacAfrica festival in Accra, Ghana.

This announcement was made by Siphosethu Sibandze, the film’s director, actor, and writer, who expressed immense pride in this achievement. The festival is scheduled to take place from September 21 to 27, 2025, and is known for celebrating the richness of African cinema.

In a heartfelt message shared on social media, Sibandze stated, “We’re thrilled to announce that our film ‘A Dream (Liphupho)’ has been officially selected for the FestacAfrica in Accra, Ghana! We’re honoured to be part of this great selection at the amazing festival, showcasing the best of African cinema.

Join us from September 21st to 27th as we celebrate the power of storytelling and filmmaking. Salute to the Cast and crew for this wonderful collaboration.” The FestacAfrica festival holds a significant

place in the history of African arts and culture, being one of the oldest festivals on the continent. It serves as a platform for artists and filmmakers to showcase their work, fostering unity and collaboration among African nations. Sibandze said that being part of this festival is particularly meaningful, especially considering the film’s previous accolades.

“This recognition means the world to us, especially given the film’s previous awards,” he remarked, highlighting the journey the film has taken to reach this point. “A Dream (Liphupho)” stands out due to its unique narrative and the authenticity of its characters. The film explores universal themes such as hope, resilience, and determination, which resonate deeply with audiences. Sibandze believes that these elements contribute to the film’s appeal, allowing it to connect with viewers on a personal level. He emphasised the importance of storytelling in reflecting cultural experiences and fostering understanding among diverse communities.



Yvonne Chaka Chaka takes legal action after her face was used in fake AI video advert

LEGENDARY South African musician Yvonne Chaka Chaka is fuming after discovering a fake AI-generated advertisement using her image and AI generated voice without permission. The video falsely portrays the music icon as endorsing an arthritis product, sparking outrage and concern among her loyal fanbase. In the video, which circulated widely on social media before being taken down, Chaka Chaka appeared to be enthusiastically promoting the product. However, the 58-year-old Princess of Africa quickly took to Facebook to set the record straight. Fake video source unknown

“Just to let you know I have nothing to do with this product. They have used AI to make it sound like me. Very sad. They have no permission to use my photos and my face. Lawyers’ letters are on their way. Please take this down. This is all FAKE.”

Speaking exclusively to Sunday World, Chaka Chaka revealed her frustration at being unable to trace the shadowy company behind the scam. Fake video source unknown

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Speaking exclusively to Sunday World,



▲ South African musician Yvonne Chaka Chaka.

Lawyers’ letters are on their way. Please take this down. This is all FAKE.”

Speaking exclusively to Sunday World,

Chaka Chaka revealed her frustration at being unable to trace the shadowy company behind the scam. ((Sunday World))

Vusi Thembekwayo shares stage with Oprah Winfrey and TD Jakes

ACCLAIMED South African business leader Vusi Thembekwayo has made history as the first African speaker at the prestigious 2025 Good Soil Forum, hosted by Wells Fargo. The event, held in Dallas, US, saw Thembekwayo share the stage with global icons Oprah Winfrey and Chairman TD Jakes, marking a significant moment during his extensive 2025 global speaking tour. Addressed elite audiences

The tour, spanning March to October, takes Thembekwayo across Africa, the US, Canada, the UK, the UAE, and the Caribbean. He has addressed elite audiences, including corporate giants like Amazon and top academic institutions such as Harvard, Cambridge, and the



▲ The event, held in Dallas, US, saw Thembekwayo share the stage with global icons Oprah Winfrey and Chairman TD Jakes,

Oxford Union. On June 12, he captivated over 1, 500 delegates with his “Opening Inspiration Session”. In it he was drawing from his School of Scale accelerator programme.

“It was a profound honour to represent the continent and share the stage with luminaries like Ms Oprah Winfrey and Chairman TD Jakes,” he said. “My message was a testament to the work we do every day at School of Scale: that entrepreneurs, when given the right tools, mentorship, and accountability, can achieve exponential growth.”

Blueprint for entrepreneurs

Thembekwayo shared a blueprint for entrepreneurs to move beyond the “hustle” phase, building sustainable, high-growth enterprises.

“We are dedicated to providing a clear, bat-

tle-tested roadmap that transforms businesses. Our impact is not theoretical. It’s measured in the tangible success of the founders we have the privilege to serve,” he added.

Based in Delaware, the School of Scale targets growth-stage founders. It offers a three-month intensive immersion followed by nine months of strategic advisory support from a global faculty.

In May this year Thembekwayo etched his name in history with a resounding victory at the Oxford Union debate. Paired with American philosopher Dr Umar Johnson, Thembekwayo championed the motion, “The House Believes Africa Must Evict Its Colonial Masters”. It secured him a commanding 273 votes to 28.

“The debate was held in the Oxford Union’s revered chamber. A 202-year-old cornerstone of global intellectual discourse. It drew a packed audience that erupted after Thembekwayo’s speech. Hailed as a “masterpiece” by attendees. (Sunday World)

Maskandi artist Khuzani Mpungose to tie the knot in December

MASKANDI superstar Khuzani Mpungose, the pride of Nkandla, is set to walk down the aisle on December 15, in what promises to be a spectacular celebration of love and Zulu culture.

Known for hits like Ijele and Umjolo Lowo, the 35-year-old singer has kept his love life a secret, making this wedding announcement a thrilling scoop for his Blue Nation fans.

Mpungose has chosen his hometown of Nkandla for the nuptials, a fitting tribute to his roots as a member of the Mpungose royal family. While the identity of his fiancée remains a closely guarded secret, sources reveal the wedding will be a vibrant blend of traditional Zulu ceremonies and Maskandi flair.

Expect umembeso, umkhelohlo (traditional Zulu ceremonies), and a star-studded guest list featuring amakhosi (chiefs), fellow musicians, and the Blue Nation faithful.

Mpungose confirmed to Sunday World that he would be tying the knot with a woman he has been together with for 10 years.

“It’s true. I am getting married to my first wife, and I plan to marry more than one wife. At this point, I cannot share how many wives I want,” said Mpungose.

The mid-December date ensures a festive vibe, with Mpungose’s signature ability to unite people through music set to make this a wedding to remember.

Insiders hint at performances by Maskandi heavyweights and possibly collaborators like Jumbo, who joined Khuzani on the 2024 hit Noma Ungavala.

Mpungose’s journey to reach this milestone has been truly remarkable.

Bursting onto the scene in 2009 by completing Mgqumeni Khumalo’s iSecret album, he cemented his status with his 2011 debut, Bahluleke Bonke.

Since then, he has won accolades such as Ukhozi FM’s Song of the Year and KZN Entertainment Awards, all while pushing the boundaries of Maskandi.

In 2025, he celebrated his 15 years in the industry with a breathtaking performance at the Blue Nation Festival, where he sang while suspended in mid-air. Offstage, Mpungose’s heart shines as bright as his music.

In 2024, he donated R30 000 to a fan whose home was destroyed, proving he is as generous as he is talented.

Fans expect this same spirit to infuse his wedding, with the event doubling as a celebration of community and culture.

The anticipation on social media is palpable. Others are curious about the bride, especially after Mpungose quashed rumours of a romance with DJ Jacinta Ngobese in 2022.

Whoever the lucky lady is, she has won the heart of a man who embodies tradition and innovation.

The guest list is rumoured to include Maskandi stars, local dignitaries, and Mpungose’s brother, Inkosi Zakhe Mpungose, who is the head of the Mpungose clan.

(Sunday World)

▲ Acclaimed South African business leader Vusi Thembekwayo.

DREAMS can be exciting, scary, or just plain strange.

We all dream, even if we don't remember it the next day. But why? And what do our dreams mean, anyway?

What Are Dreams?

Dreams are basically stories and images your mind creates while you sleep. They can make you feel happy, sad, or scared. They may seem confusing or perfectly rational. Sometimes, they can feel so real that you may question whether you're dreaming or not.

Some experts say we dream at least four to six times a night. You can dream at any stage of sleep, but the most vivid dreams occur during a phase called REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. During this cycle of deep sleep, your brain is most active.

Dream lag

What you dream about may be linked to what's going on in your waking life. But it might not happen right away. Some experts have found what they call the "dream lag effect." Studies have found that it could take up to six days for a person's experience to show up in their dreams.

Why Do We Dream?

Many theories exist about why we dream, but no one knows for sure. Some researchers say dreams have no purpose or meaning, while others believe we need dreams for our mental, emotional, and physical health.

According to some experts, human beings have three basic needs to fulfill during our waking hours:

- **Autonomy:** We want to be able to make our own decisions.
- **Competence:** We want to feel effective as we move about our day.
- **Relatedness:** We crave connection with others.

When those needs aren't met, our frustrations may play out in our dreams.

Many studies have looked into the importance of dreams for our health and well-being. In one study, researchers woke people just as they were going into REM sleep. They found that those who weren't allowed to dream had:

- More tension
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty focusing
- Lack of coordination
- Weight gain
- A tendency to hallucinate (see things that aren't really there)

Dreams could also exist to:

- Help us solve problems in our lives
- Store away important memories
- Process emotions

If you go to bed with a troubling thought, you may wake up with a solution or at least feel better about the situation.

Some dreams may also help our brains organize our thoughts and events of the day. Others may simply result from normal brain activity and mean very little, if anything. Researchers are still trying to learn more.

Types of Dreams

Experts have so far been able to identify several types of dreams. Among them are:

Lucid dreams

An overview of dreaming



In this type, you know you're dreaming. Research shows that lucid dreaming comes with a boost of activity in parts of the brain that are usually restful during sleep. You can think of it as a brain state between REM sleep and being awake.

Some lucid dreamers are able to control some things that happen in their dreams, changing the story, so to speak. While this tactic may help sometimes, especially during a nightmare, many dream experts say it's better to let your dreams flow naturally.

Nightmares

A nightmare is a bad dream. It's common in both kids and adults. You can have a nightmare for several reasons, including:

- Stress
- A recent conflict in your life
- Fear
- A traumatic event
- Medications you're taking
- Recreational drug use

A health issue, such as untreated sleep apnea

If you keep getting a certain nightmare repeatedly, your subconscious mind (the brain activity that happens without you being aware of it) may be trying to tell you something. Listen to it. If you can't figure out why you're having bad dreams, talk to a mental health expert. They may be able to help you figure out what's causing your nightmares and give you tips to put you at ease.

Keep in mind that no matter how scary a nightmare is, it's not real and most likely won't happen in real life.

Recurrent dreams

It's common to have the same dream again and again. In fact, many people do. One theory is that it happens because you're concerned about something that keeps appearing in your dream. Your brain might be trying to find a way to process your feelings about it.

Other types of dreams include:

► **Daydreams.** You're not asleep when you daydream. But at least one small study shows that these moments of quiet reflection could help improve your learning and memory.

► **Prophetic dreams.** Throughout history, people of different religions have had intense dreams that they claim predict the future.

Does Everyone Dream the Same?

We're all curious about dreams, and how ours compare to those of other people. Here are answers to some common questions.

Does everyone dream in color?

It's unclear whether everyone always dreams in color, but your media exposure may have something to do with it. In the early 20th century, most people who

participated in dream studies said that they dreamed in black and white. But by the 1960s, when you could watch movies and TV in color, that changed. By one expert's estimate, just over 82% of people began having "Technicolor dreams."

A small study compared the dreams of people who grew up watching black-and-white movies and TV with people who had access to color TV. The study found that people who watched these old types of media were more likely to dream in shades of gray.

Do blind people dream?

Yes, and not just people who recently became vision-impaired. People who were born without vision can also have lush, colorful dreams. The brain regions that control other senses, such as hearing and touch, appear to provide extra information, allowing the brain to create a mental "movie."

Do deaf and hard-of-hearing people dream the same?

Your own personal experiences affect your dreams. In one small study, 24 deaf people and one person with hearing loss who used American Sign Language (ASL) were compared to a group of people who weren't hearing-impaired. Researchers found that people with hearing loss signed in their dreams to communicate, just like they did in real life, while the other group

used speech. The people with hearing loss also reported having much brighter and more vivid colors in their dreams.

How Long Do Dreams Last?

Although we're usually not aware of it, we sleep in 90-minute cycles. During that time, you move through different stages of sleep:

Stage I. Your brain and body are just starting to relax and drift off. This stage of light sleep usually lasts just 5-10 minutes.

Stage II. Your breathing and heart rate slow down as you get ready to fall into a deeper sleep. But you also have a few periods of brain activity that may have to do with "filing away" recent experiences. This stage lasts about 25 minutes.

Stage III. Your body and brain are fully at rest. If you're woken out of this stage, you'll probably feel foggy and may not know what's going on right away. You'll spend 20-40 minutes in this stage.

Stage IV. Here's when you finally reach REM sleep, where most dreaming occurs. In fact, your brain could be more active than it is during your waking hours! REM sleep lasts only a few minutes early in the night but gets longer in later sleep cycles.

Some experts think we spend about two and a half hours dreaming every night.

What Do Dreams Mean?

Just as there are different opinions about why we dream, there are different views about what dreams mean. Some experts insist dreams aren't connected to our real emotions or thoughts. They believe dreams are just strange stories that don't relate to normal life.

The famous psychologist Sigmund Freud was the first person to suggest that dreams are a window into our subconscious and that they reveal our:

- Unconscious desires
- Personal thoughts
- Motivations

Freud believed that dreams were a safe way to satisfy urges and desires that weren't acceptable to society.

Common themes in dreams

Freud was also the first to point out that dreams often contain similar themes.

For instance, some common negative dream themes include:

- Falling
- Swimming
- Being chased
- Being naked in public
- Being paralyzed with fear
- Being around fire
- Being late

Trying over and over to do something
Freud believed that the brain relied on such themes to process painful real-life situations, helping you distance yourself from things that may have really happened to you, but you may not want to think about them directly.

WebMD

10 ways to boost your energy in 10 minutes or less

ARE your eyelids sagging as the afternoon wears on?

When low energy drags you down, don't look to a candy bar, cup of coffee, or energy drink for a lift. The sugar and caffeine might give you an immediate pick-me-up, but after that quick high wears off, you'll crash and feel even more drained

What you need: a lasting solution to keep sluggishness at bay. Here are 10 fatigue fighters that can leave you feeling refreshed and revitalized.

1. Eat your breakfast.

People who eat breakfast every morning report less fatigue and stress than people who skip it. High-fiber foods, like hot oatmeal, stick with you longer than a sweet roll or pastry. As the day wears on, they'll prevent you from getting hungry (hunger can lead to low energy).

2. Do a downward dog.

Some studies have found that yoga, which uses various postures and deep breathing for exercise and meditation, can be an excellent fatigue fighter.

3. Belt out your favorite tune.

Singing gives you a kind of emotional high while it reduces levels of stress hormones in your body. So grab a hairbrush, put on your favorite song, and sing away. If you're at work and don't want to face your co-workers' puzzled stares, you might want to save your vocal stylings for the car.

4. Have a drink of water.

Dehydration can leave you feeling drained and fatigued. You don't necessarily have to follow the "eight glasses a day" rule, but you do want to drink enough water to keep your body well hydrated. You can tell you're well hydrated when you don't feel thirsty and your urine is light-colored. Try to get to the fridge or water cooler for a refill every few hours. The walk there will also help you wake up.

5. Go nuts.

Eat a handful of almonds or peanuts, which are high in magnesium and folate (folic acid). These nutrients are essential for energy and cell production. A lack of these nutrients in your system can leave you feeling weary.

6. Grab a cinnamon stick.

Some people say that just a whiff of this scented spice can reduce fatigue and make them feel more alert. No cinnamon handy?



Grab a mint from your bag. Peppermint's sweet aroma is another fatigue fighter for some people. More research is needed to see if and how these aromas actually affect a person's energy level.

7. Get moving.

Exercise is a natural energy booster, because whenever you do it, oxygen-rich blood surges through your body to your heart, muscles, and brain. Regularly squeezing a workout into your day -- even if you can spare only 10 minutes at a time -- will help keep your energy levels at their peak. Move around every chance you get, even if it's just to pace in circles while you're on the phone.

8. Let the sunshine in.

Research suggests that just a few minutes of walking outside on a warm, clear day may enhance mood, memory, and the ability to absorb new information. Going outside

can even improve your self-esteem. If you absolutely can't get out, at least open the shades.

9. Have a bite.

Your brain needs fuel to function at its best. When your blood sugar level drops, your mind will start running on fumes and will feel fuzzy as a result. So if your head is starting to droop, eat a snack that will give you enough energy to take you through the rest of the afternoon. Snacks that combine protein with slow-burning carbs -- like banana slices with peanut butter, or granola with fresh berries -- are best for maintaining your blood sugar levels over the long term.

10. Hang out with upbeat friends.

Emotions are surprisingly contagious. People who are constantly negative and down can sap your energy, while those who are always up and excited can give you a real lift. **WebMD**

Odd pictures of the week



▲ An attendee arrives in costume for the opening day of Comic-Con International in San Diego, California. (All pictures from Reuters)



▲ People take part in the annual “Archstoyanie” festival of landscape art objects and contemporary art at the cultural venue Nikola-Lenivets in the Kaluga region, Russia.



▲ Children drive a homemade car as dozens of participants compete with hand-built motorless vehicles during the XXIV Motorless Car Race, in La Paz, Bolivia.



▲ A customized 1960 Ford Ranchero is displayed at the Dogtown Super Show in Venice Beach, California.



▲ Children sitting in a basin react as they are pulled through a flooded area on Manila North Road following heavy rains brought by Typhoon Co-may in Minalin, Pampanga, Philippines.



▲ Participants handle creations as the art project “The Herds” visits Sergels Torg in Stockholm, Sweden, July 25. The Herds is an international art and climate manifestation with a herd of life-size animals, made of cardboard and designed by puppeteers in South Africa, on tour in Africa and Europe.



◀ A herd of wild Chincoteague Ponies make the swim from Assateague Island to the shores of Chincoteague as part of the 100th annual Chincoteague Pony Swim, which rounds up wild ponies for later auction, in Chincoteague, Virginia.

Fabian McCarthy confident Chiefs will play MTN8 next season

AFTER missing out on the MTN8 back-to-back, Fabian McCarthy says he is confident that his former club, Kaizer Chiefs, will qualify for the top-eight competition next season.

Amakhosi failed to qualify for the MTN8 for the second time in a row after finishing ninth in the Betway Premiership last season. McCarthy, who was speaking to Sunday World on the sidelines after the MTN8 launch in Randburg on Wednesday night, said the competition is no longer the same without Chiefs.

"I would have loved to see Chiefs playing in the top eight, especially for my son Aiden [McCarthy], who would have maybe made his debut in the MTN8," McCarthy said.

"When I left Chiefs [in 2008], they won this competition, but before that, I had won it several times with the club, so it would have been nice to see Aiden also make his mark in the competition this season. "Chiefs tried to get into the top eight last season, but unfortunately, in the last game of the season, they fell short with a goalless draw against Polokwane City. However, I am confident that Chiefs will definitely be in the top eight next season."

Richards Bay cannot be underestimated

McCarthy also expressed his excitement about having Richards Bay form part of the competition for the first time this season.

"I am excited about this season because we have a Richards Bay that will be competing in the MTN8 for the first time, and I think they will have a point to prove and play for.

"So, I am not underestimating any team in this competition because we all saw what happened last year, when Sundowns almost got eliminated by Polokwane City, and that showed that every team in the league is capable enough to compete.

"This is the kind of competition where you only need to win four games to be R10-million richer [winners' prize money], and players will get early Christmas bonuses, and all the prize money that will be up for grabs for the fans as well," McCarthy added.

MTN8 Quarterfinal Fixtures:

Orlando Pirates vs Polokwane City | Saturday: Orlando Stadium (3pm)

Sekhukhune United vs TS Galaxy | Saturday: Peter Mokaba Stadium (6pm)

Stellenbosch FC vs AmaZulu | Sunday: Cape Town Stadium (3pm)

Mamelodi Sundowns vs Richards Bay | Sunday: Lucas Moripe Stadium (6pm)



▲ Fabian McCarthy says he is confident that his former club, Kaizer Chiefs, will qualify for the top-eight competition next season.

Chiefs confirm another departure

KAIZER Chiefs have confirmed that left back Bongani Sam has left the club without having played a single match for the club.

Sam signed for Chiefs from Orlando Pirates at the start of the 2024/25 season, but came back from their pre-season camp in Turkey with an injury and never made an appearance in the whole campaign.

Chiefs reach agreement with Sam

Sam signed a three-year deal with Chiefs, but the player and club have now negotiated a settlement and the 27-year-old is free to join a club of his choice.

"After just one season, Kaizer Chiefs have amicably agreed to part ways with defender Bongani Sam," said Chiefs on Twitter on Thursday. "The Gqeberha native joined the team from Orlando Pirates in July 2024. Wishing Bongani all the best."

Plenty of left backs

Chiefs have already reinforced their left back position ahead of the new season, signing both Nkanyiso Shinga from Portugal's FC Alverca and Paseka Mako, who was a free agent after being released by Pirates. Amakhosi also have Bradley Cross and Happy Mashiane on their books, though Kick Off have reported that Mashiane could leave the club.

(The Citizen)



Ex-Sundowns defender joins Liverpool on loan

FORMER Mamelodi Sundowns defender Lucas Suarez is set to complete a loan move to Liverpool Futbol Club following his unsuccessful stay with the Brazilians.

The 30-year-old centre back joins the Uruguayan side on a season-long loan with an option to purchase from the Argentine outfit CA Talleres. Suarez spent the second half of last season at Sundowns on loan from Talleres.

The deal had an option to buy, but the Brazilians decided against taking it after the defender failed to impress during his six-month stay at the club.

During his stay at Sundowns, Suarez made 14 appearances across all competitions and

scored a solitary goal. He won the Betway Premiership title with the Brazilians.

Meanwhile, another former Sundowns defender, Rushine De Reuck has joined Tanzanian Premier League giants Simba SC. De Reuck, who spent six months on loan with Maccabi Petah Tikva in Israel, has signed a one-year deal plus an option to renew for a further year. The 29-year-old defender will be reuniting with coach Fadlu Davids, having previously played under him at Maritzburg United, now known as Durban City after changing their name.

Suarez and De Reuck will be looking to reignite their careers in Argentina and Tanzania, respectively.

(The Citizen)

Rassie looks at player ages, prep for 2027 World Cup

SPRINGBOK coach Rassie Erasmus said aside from issues in their game play, the team is in a good place halfway through its four-year preparation cycle for the next World Cup.

When also asked whether some senior players would still be considered for the 2027 global showpiece in Australia, he said selection would be fair – If older players are still performing, they will be there.

Erasmus was speaking to media amid their two-week training camp in Johannesburg ahead of their Rugby Championship title defence. This begins with games against Australia in Johannesburg and Cape Town on 16 and 23 August, respectively.

Gap in player experience

Thirty-seven Test-capped players are included in the squad for those games, with eight capable Springboks acting as backup.

Three Junior Springbok stars who helped their team win the World Rugby U20 Championship joined the camp, as Erasmus seeks depth and eyes all "possibilities of players" in the coming months and years. When asked about preparation for 2027, Erasmus said, "I can't really say there are any problems – I am not saying with our game, there are lots of things we must fix."

He said during Covid, players lost out on rugby from school level all the way to domestic and international level. Erasmus saw the result of that in the quality of players currently aged 20 to 26. But he was

adapting to this. "You lose two years of guys developing. But overall, apart from that I'll be looking for excuses because I think we are pretty much on track.

"But we are trying to focus on the now without forgetting the future. We know 2027 is going to be big but if we don't do well leading up to it, we might lose momentum."

Older Springboks will be selected if they perform

The Springboks have a number of older players who may retire in the coming years. Siya Kolisi, 34, Cobus Reinach, 35, Bongi Mbonambi, 34, Damian de Allende, 33, Eben Etzebeth, 33, Faf de Klerk, 33, Franco Mostert, 34, Makazole Mapimpi, 35, Vincent Koch, 35, and Willie le Roux, 35, are among them.

Erasmus said age was not as important as ability. "Probably all of us will be involved until 2027 if I don't get fired before then," he smiled.

However, he said, "Trying to calculate which guys will be there in 2027, that's why we had a camp with 45 guys here. Because we are not 100% sure. "Some guys we feel iffy, some guys we think will definitely make it. Some guys are just freaks of ath-

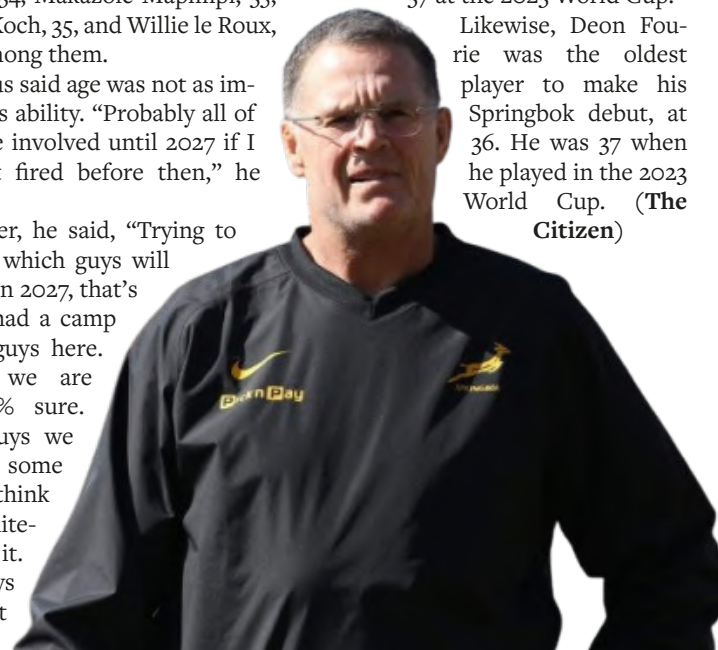
letes, like Johnny Sexton who can play until they are 38. But you don't get a lot of those."

That was why he was trying to build a large player base.

"They plan their rugby lives around their age and how well they can play. So if they are still in the top one to three in their positions until 2026, we'll probably play those guys. But making plans like we did, having bigger groups, making sure the younger guys coming through are quite comfortable... I think we are okay."

In recent history, Schalk Brits played in the 2019 World Cup at the age of 38, and Duane Vermeulen was 37 at the 2023 World Cup.

Likewise, Deon Fourie was the oldest player to make his Springbok debut, at 36. He was 37 when he played in the 2023 World Cup. (The Citizen)



▲ Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus said aside from issues in their game play,



PSG fined by UEFA for fan misconduct at Champions League final

PARIS St Germain have been fined after misconduct by their fans during the club's Champions League final win over Inter Milan in May, European soccer governing body UEFA said on Thursday.

The French champions, who thrashed Inter 5-0 at the Allianz Arena in Munich, were charged after a

pitch invasion by supporters, the setting off of fireworks, throwing of objects, damage to property and the display of an inappropriate message. Thousands of PSG fans flooded onto the field after the whistle to celebrate the club's first European Cup triumph, with a large number of supporters from behind the goal spilling onto the pitch, overwhelming stewards who struggled to keep control.

In total, PSG were fined 148,000 euros (\$169,208.40), with the biggest penalty for the pitch invasion and use of pyrotechnics.

UEFA's Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body also issued a ban on PSG's away ticket sales for one UEFA match, suspended for two years.

(Reuters)

Gyokeres plays down Henry comparisons

ARSENAL striker Viktor Gyokeres said he wants to carve out his own place in the club's history and has played down comparisons with Thierry Henry after taking the number 14 jersey.

The 27-year-old Sweden international, who bagged 54 goals in all competitions last season, completed his 63.5 million euros (\$72.56 million) switch from Sporting on Saturday. Gyokeres took Arsenal's vacant number 14 shirt, which former captain Henry famously wore on the way to becoming the club's record scorer. "Of course I know about

the history," Gyokeres told British media on Wednesday. "To be honest, there weren't so many numbers available.

There weren't too many to pick from.

"But of course, that one was available. So when I knew that, it was an easy choice to take it.

"It's not really my intention to be compared with what he's achieved in his career. Especially here. I just want to do my own thing and show my qualities. Of course he was an amazing player, but different from me."

Arsenal begin their new Premier League campaign at Manchester United on August 17.



▲ Arsenal striker Viktor Gyokeres.



Charlie Woods vaults into contention at Junior PGA Championships

CHARLIE Woods vaulted into contention at the Junior PGA Championships with a 6-under par 66 in the second round in West Lafayette, Ind. on Wednesday.

After carding a 70 during the first round on the Kampen-Cosler Course at the Birk Boiler-maker Golf Complex, Woods birdied six of his first eight holes en route to making the turn in 5-under 31 on Wednesday.

He birdied three of his first six holes on the back to reach 9 under for the event before consecutive bogeys dropped Woods back to 7 under. He is seven shots behind leader Lunden Esterline, a 2027 Auburn commit, with Max

VanderMolen and Chase Yenser tied at 9 under with 36 holes to play.

Woods, 16, failed to qualify for the match play rounds at last week's U.S. Junior Amateur Championship in Dallas. He is now seeking one of the two automatic spots on the Junior Ryder Cup team that will go to the top two finishers this week. There is also one captain's pick, although Woods is likely not in line to be selected for it.

A rising junior at the Benjamin School in Palm Beach, Fla., Woods won the AJGA's Team TaylorMade Invitational in May. He has not yet made a college commitment. (Reuters)

Verstappen confirms he will stay at Red Bull next year

BUDAPEST - Four-times Formula One world champion Max Verstappen has ended speculation about a move to Mercedes next season by confirming for the first time on Thursday that he will race on with Red Bull.

"I think it's time to stop all the rumours. For me, it was always quite clear that I was staying," the Dutch driver told reporters ahead of the Hungarian Grand Prix.

"And that was the general feeling in the team because we are always in discussion about what we could do with the car and when you're not staying you stop talking about these kind of things. And I never did." Formula One starts a new engine era next year in a major shake-up that could change the pecking order, with Mercedes expected to lead the way while Red Bull are making their own power unit after a split with Honda.

Reigning champion Verstappen has known break clauses in his contract but they have not been triggered, with the 27-year-old third in the standings at the mid-point and with two wins from 13 races.

It was widely accepted in Formula One that Verstappen would be staying, with the rumour-mill already turning to a possible exit from Red Bull in 2027 with performance clauses again applying next year. Verstappen otherwise has a Red Bull contract that runs through 2028.

The sacking of Christian Horner



▲ Four-times Formula One world champion Max Verstappen.

this month as Red Bull team boss was also widely seen as another step by the energy drink company to convince the sport's most sought-after driver to stay with them.

"Some people just like to stir the pot, some people just like to create drama. But, for me, it's always been quite clear," said Verstappen.

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said last week that retaining his current lineup of George Russell and Italian Kimi Antonelli was a priority.

Russell told reporters separately at the Hungaroring that he was sure to be racing for Mercedes next year but nothing would be signed until after the August break, which follows the Hungarian race.

While Russell's current deal expires at the end of the year, he has

been under a management contract with Mercedes since he was 16 -- meaning his employers are effectively negotiating with themselves.

"Conversations have started but we are now heading into the summer break," said Russell.

"Toto and I have spoken a lot this week but we haven't spoken once about the contract because we're both trying to solve the car's performance and get the team in the right place.

"And I personally want to go into the summer break and enjoy the only two weeks off I have in the year and I don't want to be thinking about contracts," he added. "There isn't really a major time pressure now from my side, nor from Mercedes' side."

(Reuters)

‘Sink the Black’ in 16–Men Magudlu Pool KO

By Chris Dlamini

START your August with a chance to win E1 000 after a few games of pool. A 16-Men Pool Knockout Tournament sponsored to the tune of E2 000 is on the cards on Sunday, August 3.

The catch is that each participating player has to pay E100 as a joining fee. The grand prize for the one to be crowned champion is E1 000.

“Only the Billiards and Games Arena League players and patrons qualify for the tournament. It’s a first come, first served,” reads a memo by the coordinator Sithembiso ‘Dodge’ Matsebula.

The playing format with race to five frames in the preliminary round and race to seven in the final. The pay structure is listed in full, with the top four to be rewarded.

The runner-up will pocket E500, then E250 for the semi-finalists. Registration can be done through 7608 0305 or 7908 0305.

- Prizes:
1. E1 000
 2. E500
 3. E250
 4. E250



▲ A 16-Men Pool Knockout Tournament sponsored to the tune of E2 000 is on the cards on Sunday, August 3.



▲ Pool players Khanyokuhle Simelane and Eddie Mondlane.

Sonic dislodges ‘Bharuka’

ITS dog-eat-dog between pool stars Sonic Dlamini and Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane.

The two are not giving the other a breather in the Sphana Investments Manzini Zonal Open Singles League. With each passing week, they interchange the top two spots.

This weekend will come with Mondlane down to second and Dlamini at the summit. Interestingly, they are level on 39 points after 13 games apiece.

None of these has lost a match, and their number three, Malangeni Dlamini, has 30 points in 15 games. On fourth is Flag Nxumalo with 27 points in 13 games, followed by Khanyokuhle ‘Play-Station’ Simelane on fifth with 27 points after 12 games.

At the bottom four, there is Mpendulo Mkhabela with three points, Norman Khoza (no games played), Mlondi Matsebula (no games played), and Gcina Magagula with zero points after 11 matches.

Run Wild Eswatini: Early Bird entries close

By Chris Dlamini

THE early bird entries to the Run Wild Eswatini Trail Run have since closed.

This follows the set deadline, July 31, at midnight after it was initially extended. The Trail Run scheduled for the Mbuluzi Game Reserve will take place from August 15 to 16.

The two-day event is not just a trail run but a family-friendly weekend adventure set in the heart of the Mbuluzi Game Reserve.

Big Game Parks’ Nkosephayo Nkambule confirmed this was set to be a fun-filled event, with an E850 Early Bird Runner’s full weekend pass. This will be 30 per cent off for all Oracle Insure clients. However, the price was expected to rise as of midnight, as per the July 31 deadline.

Meanwhile, those to take part will be part of the fun, experience of various race distances like the 6km Topsy Trail Run, among others.

“With scenic runs, live entertainment, good food, and even better company, this is your chance to experience the wild side of wellness among each other.

“Whether you’re here for the challenge, the cider, or to cheer from the sidelines, there’s something for everyone,” read an excerpt from the press release by the organisers.

It also stated that the 6km run would see participants run with beer and cider in hand on a Friday sunset fun race. The E850 ticket includes this run, 12km, and 21km half marathon on Saturday’s non-competitive runs.

On top of the above, the ticket includes access to Run Wild Race Village, evening entertainment by Pedro Barbosa live (Saturday), entry to Rocking Rapids Post Run Festivities, conversation fees, camping fees, craft drink bars, food vendors and chill zones.

There are options to accommodate everyone, as will be listed in this article. Meanwhile, early bird entries close on Monday, July 28.



The Run Wild Eswatini Options:

Friday

4pm - Topsy Run (6km)

Saturday

From 6.30am - 6km, 12km, 21km

Ticket prices:

Saturday only

E300 - Run & Go

E350 - Saturday Day Pass

E550 - Supporter Weekend Pass

Kids Pass (Under-15) - E150

▲ Female runners in action during the previous edition of the Eswatini trail run.

The future's bright — boxing coach

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela
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BOXING development coach Nkosinathi Dlamini is a happy man following the country's achievement in the African School Games Championships.

This comes after youngster Khetselo Mziyako clinched a bronze medal at the inaugural continental school's champions in Algeria.

"We are proud of Khetselo's achievement, and the future of the sport is bright. We urge the boxer to remain focused on his career until he reaches his full potential. We commend the good work done by his coaches back home," he said.

Khetselo lost to a Tunisian opponent, Rhouma Mouhamed Ayoub, in the semifinals of his bouts on Tuesday evening, making him a third-place finisher in the 54 kg category.

Another local boxer, Robert

Bhila, suffered an early exit in the tournament following a defeat to a Namibian opponent.

Team Eswatini chef de mission Ntombikayise Masango congratulated the boxer on his latest achievement.

"We are proud of Khetselo and encourage him to continue working hard in the future until he becomes a professional athlete," she said.

Khetselo will earn E10 000 through the government podium incentive program under the ministry of Sports, culture, and Youth Affairs.

Eswatini School Sports Association (ESSA) president Zakhele Myeni is the General Team manager at the games.

Team Eswatini is competing in several disciplines such as athletics, swimming, taekwondo, and equestrian at the newly introduced continental youth games.



▲ The two boxers Robert Bhila and Khetselo Mziyako in Algeria.

Interesting fixtures as Mhlume U13 League kicks off

INTERESTING fixtures are on the cards this weekend as the RES Siyakha 1800 Mhlume U13 League kicks off this weekend.

The matches are set to take place at Mhlume High School Sports Ground on Saturday.

According to an official fixture, three matches have been lined up starting at 11 am on the day. The first match will see Professionals take on Velocity, while Rising Stars and Real Stars clash in the second match. The last match is between Peacemakers and Tigers.

The RES Siyakha Juniors Leagues are proving to be a centre of attraction for the people in the sugar-belt and neighbouring areas as about ten junior's leagues are currently underway in different zones.

The leagues incorporate both the under 13 and under 15 categories. The zones include Mafucula, Simunye, Shewula, Mhlume, and Ngomane.

The programme is financially backed by the Lubombo-based sugar manufacturing company, Royal Eswatini Sugar (RES) Corporation.

The programme is divided into three categories, namely, grassroots, juniors, and seniors league.

The Full Fixture Saturday Mhlume High School

Professionals vs Velocity.
Rising Stars vs Real Stars.
Peacemakers vs Tigers.



▲ Pupils preparing the goalposts.

RES Siyakha grassroots bring the vibe in Shewula

The RES Siyakha 1800 grassroots festival took centre stage, with close to 30 participants in attendance at Mbandzamane Sports Ground on Monday.

The event, which is organized under the auspices of Lubombo Regional Football Association (LRFA) saw children between 6-12 years, both boys and girls, participating.

The day-long event seemed to have a positive impact on the youngsters as they were visibly happy about the festivities of the day. Under the watchful eye of qualified coach educators, the children were taught the basics of football, including ball control, shooting, and dribbling.

They were also grouped to form teams

that competed in small-sided games.

According to RES Siyakha Programme Manager, Sicelo Nene, the event proved to be a success as even parents and/or guardians gave support to the children.

"We had a successful event which attracted 16 boys and eight girls, and we are happy that even parents were seen supporting the event," Nene said.

Nene further assured football lovers that such events will be the order of the day, especially during school holidays, and he urged people to support the children.

He further invited football lovers to watch the junior's leagues, which are usually staged within the sugar-belt under the banner of RES Siyakha 1800 Programme.



▲ Pupils during the Siyakha tournament held at Vuvulane.



▲ Siyakha team.

Thokozani ‘Thikithi’ Ingwenyama Cup best

By **Sibusiso Masilela**
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DYNAMITES come in small packages.

This is none other than Royal Leopards pint-sized striker Thokozani ‘Thikithi’ Dlamini, who was named the 2024/25 Ingwenyama Cup player of the tournament.

Dlamini netted the elusive strike that earned the police side over E1.4 million first prize bounty and CAF Confederation Cup ticket at the expense of Moneni Pirates.

The ex-Malanti Chiefs striker went home E15 000 richer during the gala dinner of the prestigious knockout tournament held at Mavuso Exhibition centre on Thursday.

Dlamini attributed the award to the Royal Leopards family.

“I am happy with the award, which is a collective effort from the entire family. I would like to thank everyone in the team for supporting me throughout the tournament, and I will continue working hard,” he said.

The top goal scorer award was won by Young Buffaloes utility player Sandile ‘Saviola’ Gamedze with five goals.

Gamedze went home E10 000 richer.



▲ Royal Leopards pint-sized striker Thokozani ‘Thikithi’ Dlamini, who was named the 2024/25 Ingwenyama Cup player of the tournament.



▲ Royal Leopards head coach Edwin Matsebula.

Edwin, Mlamuli scoops Ingwenyama cup gongs

IT was a night of joy for Royal Leopards on Thursday evening at Mavuso Exhibition centre.

The Ingwenyama Cup champions produced the coach of the tournament in Edwin Matsebula, who took home E10 000.

The former National Under 17 mentor guided the police service side to the crown of the prestigious knockout tournament, carrying a 1 450 first prize plus a ticket to the Confederation Cup.

‘Ingwemabalala’ goalkeeper Mlamuli Makhanya walked away

with the best goalkeeper award after keeping a clean sheet during the richest knockout tournament.

The ex-Tambuti goalminder received E10 000 for his effort.

Matsebula said he was happy with the award.

“I am pleased with the award, which is a result of unity within the entire Leopards family. I would like to thank my technical bench and players for their dedication throughout the tournament,” he said.



▲ Young Buffaloes ladies team central defender Simangele ‘Smesh’ Sikhondze.

‘Smesh’ is Women’s Cup best

YOUNG Buffaloes ladies team central defender Simangele ‘Smesh’ Sikhondze has made history in women’s football.

The Sitsebe player became the first winner of the Ingwenyama Cup women’s cup.

Sikhondze went home E2 000 richer during the prestigious knockout tournament dinner held at Mavuso exhibition centre after helping the army side beat Nsingizini Hotspurs during the inaugural Women’s cup final.

Buffaloes received E20 000 for their feat while Nsingizini Ladies went home E10 000.

The goalkeeper of the tournament was won by the army side goalkeeper Nokwanda Mamba who won E6000 while Nsingizini Hotspurs ladies Zimbabwean import Kuduwashe Basopho.

Basopho earned E1 000 for her effort.

Let’s transform local football– Zithulele Gina

SINCEPHETELO Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (SMVAF) Board Member Zithulele Gina has called for the transformation of football in the country.

Gina urged the football fraternity to produce two top stars that would be exported to Europe during the 2024/25 season, Ingwenyama Cup prize presentation held at the Mavuso Exhibition centre.

“We are happy with the proceedings of the tournament, which is now in its 7th edition. This tournament continues to resemble our identity by blending football with culture. We need to transform the sports industry by producing two stars

who can be exported to Europe and these players can boost the economy. We have seen players making a living through football, such as Lamine Yamal (Barcelona), who is of African origin,” he said.

Meanwhile, Manzini Regional Administrator Chief Gija thanked His Majesty King Mswati III for being the pioneer of the tournament.

“We are grateful for this great initiative, which resonates with our heritage as it blends football with culture. We commend the collaboration within the various committees in putting together such an important event in the country,” he said.



▲ Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (SMVAF) Board Member Zithulele.





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