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# PM rallies MPs to back E200bln grand plan

By Delisa Magagula


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# PM rallies MPs to back E200bln grand plan for Eswatini's transformation

By Delisa Magagula

PRIME Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini has called on Members of Parliament to rally behind the government's ambitious Grand Plan, a 30-year national development blueprint aimed at transforming Eswatini's economic and social landscape.

The Prime Minister made the call during a consultative engagement held with the House of Assembly at Piggs Peak Hotel on Monday.

The Grand Plan, which is currently in draft form, is built on three pillars Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Government Transformation and requires E200 billion to implement over the next three decades. The Prime Minister said the plan represents a bold and necessary shift from the incremental progress of previous national strategies.

"I am humbled to witness a presentation to this Honourable gathering, a long-awaited document, one that started as a wild idea and is finally taking shape," he told Members of Parliament.

He further said that less than two years ago, he made a presentation at Sibaya and shared what had long been conceived in his mind, but something he never thought would come to fruition, let alone that he would have to be the one driving its formulation.

The Prime Minister said he was encouraged by the national response to the plan since its conception, and that public interest in it had grown rapidly, indicating a collective readiness to shift toward a long-term development strategy that extended beyond the normal five-year political cycles.

"It is almost as if we were all in one accord, just waiting for the right moment to come up with a long-term plan that would not only take Eswatini out of an economic conundrum, but bring continuity beyond the normal five-year term for politicians," he said.



▲Members of Parliament during the engagement.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that Eswatini had made progress through previous national strategies such as the National Development Strategy, the National Development Plan, and sector-specific master plans.

However, he said that despite these efforts, broad-based prosperity and inclusive growth had remained elusive.

"Despite pockets of growth, Eswatini remains far from achieving its ambition of broad-based prosperity. Economic challenges over the past decades, including slow GDP growth, limited foreign direct investment, fiscal constraints, and high youth unemployment, have underscored the urgent need for a bold and transformative response rather than incremental change," said the PM.

He said that while past development plans had achieved gains in areas like agricultural productivity, basic education access, and SME support, structural challenges such as weak infrastructure, gaps in the health sector, and limited private sector development continued to persist.

According to the Prime Minister, the Grand Plan is a response to this moment of national reckoning.

"Eswatini stands at a critical crossroads. Will we continue on the path that has led us

here today, or will we brave a different path altogether?" he asked.

He said the long-term goal was to see Eswatini reach high-income status within the next two to three decades and be counted among the most developed nations in the world, a vision aligned with His Majesty's aspiration for the Kingdom.

"To get there, we need a deliberate and credible long-term strategy that corrals the whole of Government. We must work together to see this future materialise," he said.

Dlamini emphasised that the Grand Plan was not a quick fix, but rather a carefully structured long-term solution that had been built with extensive input from a team of young professionals, experts, and regional benchmarking efforts.

"It gives me such great pleasure to present to you a document that has taken months to put together a piece of work that has been done with such meticulous detail that it even justifies the time it has taken to produce," he said.

He said the Grand Plan would only succeed if MPs actively participated in its refinement and ultimately championed it.

"Honourable Members of Parliament, I do hope that this draft document will at least

meet some of your expectations, but most importantly, it should be able to deliver the desired outcome if executed, particularly as this plan is a direct response to the Sibaya mandate," he said.

The Prime Minister said unity was critical to the plan's success. "I have no doubt that if we pull in the same direction, having unity of purpose and driven by our common desire to serve the Nation well, we will achieve that target. For divided we fall, but united we stand," he said.

He described the strategy as one that was ambitious, innovative, and realistic, designed to attract participation from people across all sectors of society.

"We must address the multiple crises confronting the Nation and grow the economy at rates that sustainably surpass this polyresin," he added.

The Prime Minister said the Cabinet had already reviewed the framework and would do so again after Parliament's input, before final adoption.

"Our job today, therefore, is to first listen, secondly to critique, and thirdly to make an input. You are advised to provide detailed feedback or input in writing to the team so that the final document articulately captures our collective sentiments and vision for the future of this beautiful kingdom," he said.

Also speaking during the engagement was Speaker of the House of Assembly, Jabulani 'Buy Cash' Mabuza, who welcomed the consultation and called on MPs to actively contribute to the plan's development.

"This engagement is both timely and necessary. It allows Parliamentarians to not only understand the vision behind the Grand Plan but also shape it with meaningful contributions," said Mabuza.

Mabuza, who is also the Member of Parliament for Piggs Peak, said he was honoured that the historic engagement was taking place in his constituency.

"This is a proud moment for Piggs Peak. I want to encourage all Honourable Members to engage constructively. We all have a role to play in shaping the Eswatini we want to see over the next thirty years," he said.

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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DEPUTY Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla recently received a remarkable donation of assistive devices valued at nearly E1 million, aimed at enhancing the lives of persons living with disabilities throughout Eswatini.

The generous contribution was made by Shalom Disability Ministries, facilitated through the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), and was formally presented by Jee Kim and Juhne Nam, representatives of CEF.

The donation encompasses a wide range of essential mobility aids, including wheelchairs for both children and adults, crutches, canes for the visually impaired, and other vital assistive devices.

This initiative is set to significantly improve the quality of life for many individuals facing mobility challenges across the nation.

During the handover ceremony, Juhne Nam shared the poignant story behind the founding of Shalom Disability Ministries. Established in 1989 by Rev. Moses Park and his

wife in South Korea, the ministry arose from a profound personal tragedy.

The couple lost their two daughters in a devastating car accident, which also left Mrs. Park quadriplegic.

In the wake of this heart-wrenching experience, the Parks dedicated their lives to providing love and support to persons with disabilities globally, turning their grief into a mission of compassion and empowerment.

The Deputy Prime Minister expressed her heartfelt appreciation to the Park family for their selfless contributions. "We truly appreciate this generous support from the Park family.

Despite the heartbreaking incident they endured, they chose to spread love to the world and uplift persons with disabilities," she stated, underscoring the importance of such acts of kindness in fostering a more inclusive society.

In her remarks, Dladla also commended the Federation of Organisations of Disabled

## DPM receives E1mln donation of assistive devices for persons with disabilities



▲The Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla received E1 million donation of assistive devices for persons with disabilities.

People in Swaziland (FODSWA) for their vital role in cultivating a strong partnership with CEF.

This collaboration ensures that vulnerable emaSwati benefit from impactful initiatives aimed at improving their lives. "The partnership between FODSWA and CEF is a testament to what can be achieved when organisations come together for a common cause," she added.

The donation event not only highlighted the pressing needs of persons with disabilities in Eswatini but also served as a reminder of the collective responsibility to support and uplift marginalised communities.

The assistive devices provided through this generous donation will enable individuals to navigate their daily lives with greater ease and independence, fostering a sense of dignity and self-worth.

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

# Not all power cuts due to load shedding – Minister Prince Lonkhokhela

MINISTER of Natural Resources and Energy, Prince Lonkhokhela, has assured senators that government is taking decisive steps to address key national concerns including copper theft, water billing inconsistencies, and land ownership disputes.

Speaking during the Ministry of Natural Resources Senate Portfolio Committee sitting, the Minister stated that the rising cases of copper theft were a serious concern, not just for Eswatini, but globally. He revealed that the matter is being treated with urgency at Cabinet level. “Copper theft is a global challenge and not unique to Eswatini. Cabinet is currently working on finding a lasting solution to this issue which has become a thorn in the side of many utility service providers,” he said.

### Water Metering and Billing Concerns

Addressing issues around water billing inconsistencies raised by senators, Minister Lonkhokhela confirmed that the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) has already begun rolling out prepaid water meters. “The rollout of smart prepaid water meters is ongoing and will help consumers better manage their water usage and spending,” he said.

He attributed the unexplained spikes in some water bills to leakages, noting that many consumers may not be aware of under-

ground leaks that result in excessive charges. “Most increases are caused by undetected leakages. It is important for property owners to routinely check their water systems,” the Minister advised.

### Land Policy and Farm Disputes

The Minister also addressed land tenure and disputes between farm owners and dwellers, making specific reference to the Mbondzela Farm issue which has drawn public interest in recent months. “Government is already attending to matters between farm dwellers and owners, such as the situation at Mbondzela,” he said.

He added that the finalisation of the national Land Policy will play a critical role in promoting peace and stability in the country. “The Land Policy will ensure that there is peace in the country by providing clarity on land ownership, usage, and rights of occupation,” he stated.

Senators welcomed the responses but urged the Ministry to speed up implementation of measures that directly impact the lives of ordinary citizens, especially in rural communities.

... The Minister explained that some power outages caused by increased theft of copper cables



▲ Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Prince Lonkhokhela.

## Ministry should exercise duty of care – Senator, Linda Nxumalo

SENATOR Linda Nxumalo has urged the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy to prioritize public safety and communication during ongoing load shedding periods, highlighting the rising threat of crime in areas affected by blackouts.

The senator made her remarks during the recent sitting of the Senate Portfolio Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, addressing Minister Prince Lonkhokhela directly.

“Members of the public deserve to be educated on how to protect and defend themselves whenever they find themselves in the dark during load shedding,” Senator Nxumalo emphasized. “Hooligans and robbers use this opportunity to pounce on members of the public and rob them of their valuables, like cars and many more.”

She called on the Ministry to exercise a clear duty of care by initiating public education campaigns that inform citizens on safety measures during power cuts and by working collaboratively with security agencies to enhance protection during vulnerable periods.

In a shift to fiscal matters, Senator Nxumalo further interrogated the Ministry’s financial performance, referring to revenue



▲ Senator Linda Nxumalo.

reports presented during the session. “In the first quarter, the Ministry reported revenue of E46 million. I would like to ask if the projected E221 million for the year will realistically be reached in the remaining quarters,” she asked.

It should be noted that the question highlights growing parliamentary scrutiny over government revenue targets amid economic pressures and the urgent need for sustained service delivery in the energy and natural resources sectors.



## ‘Load shedding saves millions’

MINISTER of Natural Resources and Energy, Prince Lonkhokhela, has revealed that the ongoing load shedding measures by the Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) are not only necessary but are saving the utility millions of Emalangeni.

Addressing the Ministry of Natural Resources Senate Portfolio Committee, the Minister explained that load shedding is strategically implemented during peak hours when electricity costs are at their highest. “During these times, which the company has identified for load shedding, the electricity becomes very expensive for EEC,” said Minister Lonkhokhela.

He stated that by temporarily cutting supply in non-critical areas during high-cost periods, the company avoids purchasing electricity at inflated prices from regional suppliers, thus reducing operational costs significantly. “This approach helps save the company millions, which can be redirected to improve infrastructure and maintain stable supply in the long term,” he added.

The Minister acknowledged the inconvenience caused to citizens but emphasized the importance of understanding the economic logic behind the decision. He assured the

committee that EEC is working on long-term solutions to reduce the country’s dependence on imported electricity. “We are currently working on expanding local generation capacity, including renewable energy projects, which will reduce reliance on external suppliers and stabilise prices,” he said.

Some senators raised concerns over poor communication and a lack of warning to the public when load shedding occurs. In response, the Minister urged EEC to enhance its customer engagement and improve its load shedding schedules’ transparency.

The update came as part of a broader discussion covering energy supply, water billing, and land policy. Minister Lonkhokhela reiterated government’s commitment to addressing the challenges affecting service delivery in these sectors, saying that reforms are already underway.

The committee noted the responses and called for accelerated implementation of energy efficiency projects, greater investment in local energy generation, and consistent communication with affected communities.

On another note, the Minister told the Senators that the Ministry and parastatals under it do have communication officers.





# The power of breastfeeding

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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... Dr Nxumalo urges communities to embrace breastfeeding for healthier futures

**P**aediatrician Dr. Gugu Nxumalo has highlighted the numerous benefits that breastfeeding offers.

"Breastfeeding provides optimal nutrition, boosts the immune system, and significantly reduces the risk of infections and diseases such as diarrhoea, pneumonia, and meningitis," she remarked in an interview.

Dr. Nxumalo elaborated on the immediate and long-term health benefits of breastfeeding for infants. She noted that breastfeeding is not just about nutrition; it is a protective measure against various health issues. "Breastfeeding has been linked to a lower risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, asthma, and certain childhood cancers," she explained. This long-term perspective is crucial for parents to understand, as the choices made in infancy can have lasting implications on a child's health.

Dr. Nxumalo stated, "Breastfeeding helps with postpartum recovery, reduces bleeding after childbirth, and lowers the risk of breast and ovarian cancers." She also pointed out that it can mitigate the risks of type 2 diabetes and postpartum depression, emphasising that the act of breastfeeding is beneficial not only for the baby but also for the mother's health.

Breastfeeding's impact extends beyond immediate health benefits. According to Dr. Nxumalo, "Breastfeeding has been associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and certain autoimmune diseases." This connection underscores the importance of



breastfeeding as a preventive health measure for mothers, potentially reducing the burden of chronic diseases later in life. Dr. Nxumalo also addressed how breastfeeding influences infant development. "Breastfeeding promotes cognitive development, improves brain function, and supports overall growth and development," she noted.

This assertion aligns with growing research indicating that breastfed infants often perform better in cognitive assessments compared to their formula-fed peers.

The psychological benefits of breastfeeding for mothers were another focal point stressed by Dr. Nxumalo. She remarked, "Breastfeeding can reduce stress and anxiety, promote feelings of calm and relaxation, and increase feelings of motherly love and connection." This emotional aspect is vital, as it contributes to

the overall well-being of mothers and enhances their parenting experience.

The bond between mother and infant is profoundly affected by breastfeeding. Dr. Nxumalo explained, "Skin-to-skin contact and the closeness of breastfeeding strengthen the bond between mother and baby, promoting emotional connection and attachment." This connection is essential for the emotional and social development of the child, fostering a secure environment for growth.

Breastfeeding also offers emotional benefits for infants. Dr. Nxumalo pointed out that "breastfeeding provides a sense of security and comfort, which can lead to better emotional regulation and development." This sense of security is crucial during the early stages of life, as it lays the foundation for healthy emotional development.

The public health implications of breastfeeding cannot be overstated. Dr. Nxumalo stated, "Breastfeeding plays a critical role in promoting public health by reducing infant mortality, improving child health outcomes, and supporting healthy growth and development."

Finally, Dr. Nxumalo discussed how breastfeeding can contribute to reducing healthcare costs. "Breastfeeding can decrease the incidence of illnesses and diseases, reduce hospitalisations, and promote healthier outcomes," she explained. This economic aspect is particularly relevant for healthcare systems, as investing in breastfeeding support can lead to significant cost savings in the long run.

**Sr. Emerencia Stewart-Ngubane, Nursing Supervisor at Manzini Clinic and Matsapha Healthcare, shared that despite the clear health benefits, several societal challenges hinder breastfeeding practices.**

## Societal challenges impeding breastfeeding practices

Sr. Emerencia identified workplace barriers as a significant issue. "Many women face a lack of maternity leave or short leave durations, which makes it difficult to establish breastfeeding routines," she stated. Additionally, the absence of breastfeeding rooms in workplaces and unsupportive policies can further discourage mothers from breastfeeding.

Cultural beliefs and stigma also play a crucial role. "There are misconceptions that formula feeding is superior, and negative attitudes toward public breastfeeding can create an environment where mothers feel uncomfortable," she remarked. Traditional practices may also discourage exclusive breastfeeding, leading to mixed feeding practices that can undermine the benefits of breastfeeding.

Furthermore, Sr. Emerencia highlighted the lack of family or community support as a barrier. "Often, partners or elders may discourage breastfeeding, leading to isolation for new mothers," she explained. The pressures of urbanisation and modern lifestyles, including time constraints and the perceived inconvenience of breastfeeding, also contribute to the challenges faced by mothers.

Healthcare providers play a pivotal role in promoting breastfeeding. Sr. Emerencia emphasised the importance of personalised support from midwives, nurses, and paediatricians.

"These professionals are crucial in dispelling myths and providing accurate guidance on positioning, latching, and milk supply," she stated. Immediate support after birth, particularly in the first 24-48 hours, increases the chances of successful breastfeeding.

She also noted that healthcare providers can quickly identify and address common issues such as sore nipples or low milk supply, which can discourage mothers from continuing to breastfeed. "Encouragement from trusted providers boosts a mother's confidence, especially for first-time moms," she added, highlighting the need for unified messages from healthcare professionals to reinforce trust and adherence.

To foster a supportive environment for breastfeeding, Sr. Emerencia suggested several strategies for healthcare providers. "Starting early during antenatal visits to educate mothers about the benefits and basics of breastfeeding is essential," she advised. Being supportive and non-judgmental is equally important. "Listening to mothers' concerns and offering reassurance without pressure can make a significant difference," she said. Promoting skin-to-skin contact immediately after birth is also crucial to initiate breastfeeding effectively.

Providing practical help, such as demonstrating proper latching techniques and normalising challenges like engorgement, can empower mothers. "Involving family members in the education process can create a supportive home environment," she suggested, emphasising the importance of community in breastfeeding success.

In a recent interview, Sr. Takitsi Fakudze, Nursing Supervisor at Mbabane Clinic, shared her insights on breastfeeding, addressing common misconceptions, trends in breastfeeding rates, and offering practical tips for

new mothers. One of the most pervasive misconceptions that Sr. Takitsi encounters is the belief that the size and shape of a woman's breasts determine her ability to breastfeed. She firmly stated, "Every breast of a mom can feed a baby." This myth can discourage mothers who may feel inadequate based on their body type.

Additionally, Sr. Takitsi emphasised that breastfeeding is not always an easy task. "It is not every woman's reality. Some find difficulty in supply and the attachment of the baby to the breast," she explained. She highlights that breastfeeding is a skill requiring practice and patience for both mother and baby.

Another common myth is the notion that breastfeeding creates an overly dependent attachment between mother and child. "Breastfeeding babies are not overly attached to mothers; it's a natural bonding process," she clarified. Furthermore, she addressed the stigma surrounding breastfeeding in public, stating, "Breastfeeding is a natural and legal way of feeding your baby and should be normalised in public spaces."

Reflecting on the changes in breastfeeding rates over the years, Sr. Takitsi notes a stark contrast between Eswatini and high-income countries. "We have seen a decrease in breastfeeding rates among the working class, while there has been an increase in low-income and poverty-stricken areas," she observed. She attributed this trend to the high costs associated with formula feeding, which many families cannot afford. "Availability and affordability significantly influence breastfeeding decisions," she added.

Looking ahead, Sr. Takitsi foresees several trends that may shape the future of breastfeeding practices. "We are seeing an increased use of breast pumps, especially those that are enabled for telehealth," she noted, indi-

cating a shift towards more accessible breastfeeding support through technology.

She highlighted the role of online consultations for breastfeeding, which are already being conducted via social media and WhatsApp groups. "With increased education on the importance of this liquid gold (breast milk), companies are starting to implement supportive policies for breastfeeding mothers," she stated. Initiatives such as designated "breastfeeding hours" and nurseries for staff are becoming more common, which can alleviate anxiety for mothers and improve workplace morale. "This will ultimately enhance performance at work and boost revenue," she opined.

**For new mothers navigating the challenges of breastfeeding, Sr. Takitsi offers several practical tips:**

- **Practice Skin-to-Skin Contact:** Engaging in skin-to-skin contact with your newborn helps with attachment. The tummy-to-tummy method is particularly effective in establishing a bond.
- **Nipple Care:** It's essential to maintain good hygiene. Clean your nipples regularly and monitor for any cracks that may develop.
- **Breast Management:** To improve milk production and prevent discomfort, Sr. Takitsi advised mothers to empty a full breast when the baby is asleep. This practice not only increases milk supply but also helps avoid painful engorgement.



▲ Sr. Takitsi Fakudze.



▲ Sr. Emerencia Stewart-Ngubane, Nursing Supervisor at Manzini Clinic and Matsapha Healthcare

# Senators raise concerns over water billing

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

... The legislators also raised concerns about copper theft at Senate Portfolio Committee Sitting

CONCERNS over erratic water billing and the rising tide of copper theft dominated discussions during the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy’s appearance before the Senate Portfolio Committee this week.

Senator Stukie Motsa raised the issue of inconsistencies in water charges by the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC), calling for a shift to a prepaid system to eliminate confusion among consumers.

“There are inconsistencies in the charging of water by EWSC. One month a customer is charged over E1,000 and the next month only E250 — this is confusing and boggling,” Senator Motsa told Minister Prince Lonkhokhela. “I think it’s time for the members of the public to buy the amount of water they want to use, meaning prepaid.”

Smart water meters

The senator also questioned when the utility would consider rolling out smart water meters across the country to allow real-time monitoring of water usage, improve billing accuracy, and empower households to better manage their consumption.

Meanwhile, Senator Tony Sibandze turned the spotlight on copper theft, expressing concern over how some licensed scrapyards may be fuelling the crime by purchasing stolen materials.

“I am asking the ministry to define what is meant by ‘scrap’ and a ‘scrapyard,’ because some scrapyards are buying fresh stolen copper instead of actual scrap,” he said. “It’s time the Ministry sits down with the Min-



▲ Concerns over erratic water billing and the rising tide of copper theft dominated discussions during the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy’s appearance before the Senate Portfolio Committee this week.

istry of Commerce, Industry and Trade and scrapyard operators to understand why they continue to accept fresh materials. This only worsens copper theft in the country.”

Both senators called on the Ministry to act swiftly and decisively, citing public safe-

ty, fair billing, and national economic security as key areas of concern. Minister Prince Lonkhokhela acknowledged the issues and pledged that the ministry would investigate further, while also engaging relevant stakeholders.

It should be noted that the session forms part of ongoing parliamentary oversight to strengthen accountability and improve service delivery in the natural resources and energy sectors.

## I chose to drink alcohol so to drown my sorrows

“I was facing family challenges which led me to drink alcohol in a bid to drown my sorrows.”

These sentiments were shared by Sikhumbuzo Makhubula (42) of Maphungwane area yesterday when mitigating for a lenient sentence before Principal Magistrate David Khumalo at the Manzini Magistrates Court.

This came after Makhubula was nabbed for drink driving, an offence he committed on August 3, 2025 at Mafutseni area, along MR3 public road, while driving a Honda sedan registered WSD 628 CH.

His breath specimen was found with a reading of 1.84 milligrams per litre (mg/l), which was above the legal limit of 0.37 mg/l.

He pleaded guilty to the offence

and was found guilty as per his own plea.

According to Makhubula, the reason why he committed the offence was because he was stressed.

This, he said, came after he learnt that both his mother and wife were sick at the same time.

“Your worship, I decided to drink the alcohol in order to numb the pain and to drown my sorrows,” he said.

He was sentenced to two years in prison with an option of a fine of E5 000.

Meanwhile, Magistrate Khumalo informed another drink-driver that he was lucky that the maximum fine for drink drivers was E5 000, otherwise if it was not for that, he would have given him a much stiffer sen-

tence following his irresponsible act.

This came after Philani Nhlengethwa (28), from Hhelehhele area ferried passengers in a kombi, while he was under the influence of alcohol.

According to Khumalo, it was a gross irresponsibility for Nhlengethwa to drive the public transport and ferry passengers while he was intoxicated.

“You can’t ferry passengers in public transport and make them to pay a bus fare while you are intoxicated. This is totally unacceptable. You are fortunate that the maximum fine for drink-driving is E5 000, otherwise you deserve more than that,” he said.

Khumalo subsequently sentenced Nhlengethwa to two years in prison with an option of a fine of E5 000.

## BSA student arrested

A PART-TIME student at BSA Training Centre was arrested after he caused an accident while driving a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of alcohol.

Ndumiso Khumalo (24) of Mpolonjeni area appeared before Principal Magistrate David Khumalo at the Manzini Magistrates Court yesterday.

He was slapped with two charges; namely drink-driving and causing an accident after he knocked a motor vehicle from behind.

He committed both the offences on August 1, 2025 at Mabhodini area while driving a Toyota Hilux LDV registered USD 515 AH.

He pleaded guilty to both the offences and he was found guilty as per his own plea.

According to Ndumiso, he was still young and therefore, he forms part of this county’s future generation.

“Your worship when a young child has transgressed, you chastise him, not with the intention of killing him, but to show him the right direction he should take in order to succeed in life, hence I plead for a lenient sentence,” he said.

Ndumiso mentioned that the car which he was driving on the day he committed the offence belonged to his father.

When the presiding magistrate asked him if his father was aware that he drinks alcohol, he responded to the affirmative.

“My father was not aware that I drink alcohol but now he knows since I have been arrested for drink-driving,” he said.

Ndumiso further mentioned that he was a part-time student at BSA Training Centre at Motshane area and therefore, he was pleading for a lenient sentence, since his continued incarceration may affect his studies.

In response, Magistrate Khumalo mentioned that in as much as Ndumiso was young, but he still has the obligation of doing things responsible.

“Since you say you are still a student, you still have a responsibility of shaping your future but if you are imbibing alcohol it means your future is in shambles. You must change your mind if you want to reach your destiny,” he said.

He pointed out that it was unfortunate that Ndumiso was found with the highest alcohol content in his breath specimen of 2.00 milligram’s per litre (mg/l).

He therefore, subsequently sentenced him to two years in prison with an option of a fine of E5 000 on the count of drink-driving and six months imprisonment with an option of a fine of E800 on the charge of causing a road accident.





# Over 10 suspects fined for drink-driving offences

Stories by Delisa Magagula

OVER 10 individuals charged with drink-driving offences appeared before Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi at the Mbabane Magistrates Court.

The court session, held on Monday, involved cases of varying severity, with sentences reflecting the different levels of alcohol content found in the offenders.

Most of the suspects were fined

E5 000 or sentenced to two years in prison, with an option to pay the fine. Those found with lower levels of alcohol in their systems were fined E3 000 or two years imprisonment.

One individual received a particularly steep fine of E7 000 after resisting arrest and leading police officers on a brief car chase.

According to court documents, the suspect ignored police signals to stop and instead attempted to evade capture. The court noted that such behaviour put other road users at risk and warranted a harsher sen-

tence.

Magistrate Nhlabatsi stressed the dangers of drink-driving, reminding the accused that the law does not tolerate reckless behaviour on public roads.

She urged drivers to act responsibly, noting that these cases were becoming more common and endangering innocent lives.

The Eswatini Police Service has reiterated its commitment to clamp down on road violations and has increased stop-and-search operations, particularly during weekends and holidays.

## Minor arrested for DD, misses exam

A 17-year-old Form V pupil is facing legal consequences after he was arrested for drink-driving in Mbabane.

The minor appeared before Magistrate Nhlabatsi and is being held accountable for driving under the influence with a recorded blood alcohol content (BAC) of 1.35 mg/l.

The teenager was apprehended on Friday night during a police roadblock. According to court evidence, he failed a breathalyser test, leading to his arrest and detention.

He missed a scheduled examination because of his detention. The school authorities were notified, and the court was informed that the pupil could not write one of his final term papers. His legal guardian, who

is also his mother, attended the court proceedings.

Magistrate Nhlabatsi remanded the teenager into his mother's custody and set the trial date for August 19, 2025. She noted the seriousness of the offence, especially given the driver's age and the fact that he did not hold a valid driver's licence.

Police officials stated that this is one of the youngest reported drink-driving cases in the country. They expressed concern over increasing reports of teenagers engaging in risky behaviour and warned that road safety enforcement would continue.

The court has ordered that the teenager remain under strict supervision until his case is finalised.



A DOMESTIC dispute over maize meal sparked a tense courtroom exchange at the Magistrate Court in Mbabane. The matter, which involves a married couple, was transferred to chambers after emotions ran high during the hearing.

According to court submissions, the husband allegedly tried to sell several bags of maize meal without the consent of his wife.

This action is said to be in direct violation of a protection order issued by the Magistrates Court, which outlines that the couple must equally share household resources.

The wife, visibly emotional during proceedings, told the court that her husband had not been residing at their family home.

She said he had been living in Johannesburg and only returned recently. She claimed that upon his return, he attempted to take control of the food supplies.

"He wanted to sell the bags of maize meal, but we are supposed to split everything 50/50 according to the order," she stated.

The husband did not deny his intention to sell the goods but said he was acting out of necessity. He told the court that he had no income and needed funds for transportation.

Magistrate Nhlabatsi advised both parties to respect the court's ruling and reminded them that failure to comply with a protection order is a criminal offence.

The matter was adjourned and moved to chambers for further handling. Court officials said the case highlights ongoing chal-

## Court dispute over maize meal turns heated



▲ The couple in court over maize dispute.

lenges in enforcing domestic protection orders, especially in disputes involving property and resource sharing.

Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi urged a couple to keep their children out of their ongoing domestic dispute, following a tense moment in court when some of the children made murmurs while seated inside the courtroom.

The couple is involved in a legal matter concerning a protection order and allegations surrounding the sale of maize meal

bags without the wife's consent.

During proceedings, the courtroom became momentarily unsettled when murmurs were heard from children accompanying the parties.

The magistrate immediately addressed the situation, stressing the importance of shielding minors from adult conflicts. "Keep your children out of this," she said, directing her comment at both parties.

As the hearing continued, Nhlabatsi also advised the woman to allow the man to go

about his business, noting that the couple had been married under traditional law.

This followed continued back-and-forth between the pair, with both presenting conflicting claims regarding their domestic arrangement and financial disputes.

The man told the court that he had given the woman E350,000 over a period to maintain the household. He claimed that despite his financial support, issues had persisted at home, and he believed he was being unfairly excluded from decision-making, particularly regarding shared resources such as the maize meal in question.

In response, the woman denied receiving that amount and stated that the man had not been residing at the family home for some time. She said he had instead relocated to a rondavel situated on the same property but lived separately from her and the children.

She argued that he had removed himself from the home and family responsibilities and was therefore not able to make unilateral decisions regarding household property.

The magistrate listened to both parties before moving the matter to chambers for further deliberation. The case remains ongoing, with the protection order still in effect. Under the terms of the order, neither party is permitted to dispose of shared assets without mutual agreement.

BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

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Despite tariff reprieve, Lesotho says it is already hurting

MASERU, Lesotho — A reprieve from a 50 per cent U.S. tariff on goods from Lesotho has come too late to prevent damage to the tiny African kingdom's textiles industry, which has been hit hard by months of trade uncertainty, officials and industry players said. Lesotho's tariff rate was slashed to 15 per cent in last week's executive order by U.S. President Donald Trump, down from the level of 50 per cent tariff threatened in April - which was the highest of any U.S. trading partner.

Rand starts week muted as traders await tariff updates

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand was softer in early trade on Monday ahead of a briefing by the country's ministers of trade and foreign affairs where they will provide updates on progress made in negotiating a trade pact with the United States. At 0633 GMT the rand traded at 18.0525 against the U.S. dollar, about 0.2 per cent weaker than Friday's close.

EswatiniBank

FX RATES		
Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.9268	18.4188
G.B. Pound	23.5466	24.2292
EURO	20.4438	21.0817
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90 /Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	

SACU at risk, says Govt

By Delisa Magagula

THE Minister of Finance, Neal Rijkenberg, has warned that Eswatini must begin preparing for a possible future without Southern African Customs Union (SACU) receipts a major source of national revenue as the country faces growing fiscal uncertainty.

Speaking during this week's Finance in Focus segment, Rijkenberg said while there is no immediate threat to the SACU agreement, government is acutely aware that the stream of revenue could end if any member country initiates withdrawal.

"SACU could come to a grinding halt," he said, noting that the agreement allows for a 12-month notice period before dissolution.

"It's not dangerous at the moment and nothing to be scared about, but it could end, and that's something we must prepare for," he said.

Rijkenberg said government is currently reliant on SACU transfers for a substantial share of its budget and that a sudden stop would be fiscally destabilising.



▲ Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg.

"It would be terrible for us as a country to acclimatise to a non-SACU revenue environment. We would need time and possibly

more debt to navigate that transition," he said.

The Minister explained that this fiscal vulnerability underscores the importance of maintaining a conservative debt-to-GDP ratio.

"If SACU ended, we would need that headroom. We're currently just above 40 percent, and that gives us room to grow even up to 60 percent if we were forced into a crisis response," he said.

He stressed that while SACU receipts remain a lifeline for now, Eswatini must begin developing a 'Plan B' to gradually reduce its dependency.

This includes expanding domestic revenue streams, attracting private investment, and diversifying the economy to absorb potential future shocks.

"Right now, SACU is a large portion of our funding, but we cannot afford to be complacent. It is wise of us to plan for a situation where SACU could no longer be relied upon," said the Minister.

Rijkenberg maintained that Eswatini's economic strategy should prioritise resilience, not just growth.

He called on policymakers to take the SACU risk seriously and begin preparing for a future where the fiscal framework is no longer propped up by regional customs revenues.

Debt-to-GDP could hit 60% if SACU ends

By Delisa Magagula

MINISTER of Finance Neal Rijkenberg says Eswatini's current debt-to-GDP ratio just above 40 percent remains within a safe and manageable range but warned that the number could escalate significantly if SACU receipts are withdrawn.

Rijkenberg addressed Members of Parliament who recently questioned why government continues to maintain the 40 percent threshold, despite most African countries having ratios exceeding 60 percent.

He explained that Eswatini's approach is a deliberate and prudent strategy to preserve fiscal flexibility.

"There was a good motion in Parliament asking why we keep our debt-to-GDP at around 40 percent when other countries are at 60 percent or higher. The answer is that once we raise our debt, interest payments start to crowd out essential spending especially in education and health," he said.

He further noted that Eswatini has already taken on E36 billion in total government debt but has only drawn down on a portion of that.

"There's still about E17 billion in loans that we've signed for, but haven't yet accessed. So those amounts are sitting there and will be drawn down in future budgets," he said.

Rijkenberg stressed that while the current debt load appears moderate, the actual commitment is higher due to undrawn loans already accounted for. He added that keeping the ratio low has multiple benefits for both government and the private sector.

"One of the main advantages is that we get very good lending rates. Because of our prudent approach, we're seen as a low-risk borrower, which brings down the cost of our external debt," he said.



▲ Southern African Customs Union (SACU) headquarters in Namibia.

"If we go beyond 45 or 50 percent, we lose that credibility. Lenders will begin to charge more, and some may become hesitant to lend at all," he added.

The Minister also touched on the cost difference between domestic and external debt.

"Domestic debt is a bit more expensive, but our external debt is still very well priced due to our disciplined fiscal approach," he explained.

He noted that the low debt ratio not only affects government borrowing costs but also improves investor confidence.

"When investors especially foreign ones look at our macroeconomic indicators, they feel confident that their money is safe here," he said.

He further said it's part of why people are willing to invest in Eswatini. Rijkenberg said that if SACU revenues were to be cut off, government could temporarily allow the debt ratio to rise as high as 60 percent to cushion the impact but only as a short-term solution.

"We could manage it if we had to. It wouldn't be fun, but it would be manageable. That's why

we need to preserve the space to grow our debt if we face such a crisis," he said.

He also shared broader advice on debt management, drawing a parallel between national policy and household budgeting.

"Debt is expensive," he said, adding that Emaswati should aim to keep personal debt repayments below 30 percent of income.

He encouraged citizens to begin paying off smaller debts first such as retail accounts to reduce the total number of obligations and gradually ease financial strain.

In closing, Rijkenberg reiterated the need for responsible debt management at both government and household levels, especially as global and regional risks continue to evolve.

He said the finance ministry remains committed to staying within the 45 percent ceiling, as a way to future-proof the country's economy.

"We're choosing the conservative path, not because we fear debt, but because we want to be ready for whatever comes next," he said.

# Herefords gains reliable access to clean water through W.A.S.H Project

By Delisa Magagula

THE community of Herefords, located under Mayiwane Inkhundla, has marked a significant milestone with the completion of a water, sanitation, and hygiene (W.A.S.H) project.

This was implemented through a strategic partnership between Engineers in Action and the Microprojects Programme under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

This development initiative is set to directly benefit 256 pupils from Herefords Primary School and surrounding residents by providing access to clean, safe, and reliable water a resource the community has long struggled to obtain consistently.

The handover ceremony, held on-site, was a moment of shared celebration among stakeholders, community leaders, volunteers, and implementing partners.

Speaking on behalf of the local project committee, Sicelo Motsa expressed sincere appreciation for the completion of the project, citing the challenges the community previously faced in accessing safe drinking water.

“We have nothing more to say but thank you. We worked together in unity, and we will always remember you for the knowledge you shared,” Motsa said.

He extended well wishes to the project team as they departed and encouraged the students who participated to continue extending their service to others.

The project was led on the ground by a team of Engineers in Action student volunteers and construction specialists, with logistical and funding support coordinated through the Microprojects Programme.

The W.A.S.H initiative included the installation of a functional and tested water system, which now serves both the school and surrounding homesteads.

The infrastructure meets quality assurance standards and has been confirmed as safe for consumption through laboratory testing.

Sibusiso Mbingo, Director of the Microprojects Programme Coordinating Unit, praised the initiative’s alignment with national development goals, particularly the prioritisation of sustainable and equitable access to essential services in rural areas.

“Many schools across the country still lack access to clean water. This remains a critical barrier to learning and health outcomes. That’s why we are looking forward to initiating more water projects in the coming year,” Mbingo stated.

He further acknowledged the value of continuous partnership with Engineers in Action, noting their consistent contribution to rural development in Eswatini.

Mbingo also encouraged the school’s leadership to build on the momentum created by the project by commencing the construction of improved sanitation facilities.

“We encourage the head teacher to collect cement from our unit so they may begin building new toilets for the school,” he said.

The project’s implementation relied heavily on collaboration, local engagement, and shared learning between community members and the technical team.



▲MP Sicelo Dlamini launching the programme.



▲Project Manager Catherine Papa speaking at the event.



▲Members of the Engineers in Action team.

Project Managers Catherine Papa and Violeta Egan commended the level of participation, respect, and cooperation exhibited by residents and volunteers.

“We came here not just to build, but to learn and we thank the Herefords community for trusting us, guiding us, and walking this journey with us,” they said.

They highlighted the critical role played by parent volunteers, local builders, and coordinators, adding that the success of the project was rooted in the relationships built on-site.

Papa and Egan extended special appreciation to several key individuals and partners who ensured the project was executed to standard, including Patrick Maatse, Thando, Nsika, and the local contracting team.

They also recognised the invaluable support of Simphiwe and Thomas (site builders), as well as site coordinator Khayelihle, whose leadership was described as compassionate and effective.

Additional gratitude was expressed to the Dlamini family of Herefords, who hosted members of the project team throughout the duration of their stay.

Their hospitality and willingness to integrate the team into the community environment was acknowledged as instrumental to the smooth execution of the project.

Project Manager Patrick Maatse, who supervised technical aspects of the construction, described the community’s cooperation as exemplary.

“From the very beginning, the commitment here was strong. Everyone played their part and that’s what made it work,” he said.

He confirmed that the installed system was functioning efficiently and had passed water safety inspections, noting that the outcome was a direct result of meticulous collaboration and attention to detail.

The Head Teacher of Herefords Primary School, who spoke on behalf of the school administration, described the intervention as transformative for both education and health.

“Goodbye to stomach bugs, and good morning to clean water,” she said enthusiastically, before extending gratitude to Engineers in Action, Microprojects, and the Dlamini family for their support and generosity.

The local Member of Parliament, Honourable Sicelo Dlamini, attended the handover event and commended the project’s execution.

He praised the leadership of the head teacher and highlighted the importance of community engagement in ensuring the long-term success and maintenance of development projects.

“This project has demonstrated the power of local ownership and responsive leadership. The commitment from the school and the community has been commendable. We are confident this resource will be properly maintained and safeguarded,” he said.

Honourable Dlamini reaffirmed his commitment to supporting ongoing development efforts in the region, and he encouraged stakeholders to continue strengthening partnerships that drive tangible results at community level.

The project has not only improved water access but has also become a model of integrated development that brings together government institutions, technical partners, and grassroots actors. Its success underlines the potential of infrastructure investments to improve lives in underserved areas.

As the Herefords community now moves forward with a sustainable water source, the broader impact of the project is expected to be felt in areas such as school attendance, hygiene practices, and community health.

In closing, stakeholders expressed optimism that the Herefords W.A.S.H project would serve as a benchmark for similar initiatives nationwide, and a reminder that meaningful progress is possible when communities and institutions work together with shared purpose and mutual respect.

# Despite tariff reprieve, Lesotho says it is already hurting

By Marafaele, Mohloboli and Sisipho Skweyiya

MASERU, Lesotho — A reprieve from a 50 per cent U.S. tariff on goods from Lesotho has come too late to prevent damage to the tiny African kingdom's textiles industry, which has been hit hard by months of trade uncertainty, officials and industry players said.

Lesotho's tariff rate was slashed to 15 per cent in last week's executive order by U.S. President Donald Trump, down from the level of 50 per cent tariff threatened in April - which was the highest of any U.S. trading partner.

Textile industry players in the country - which produces jeans and other garments for popular U.S. brands such as Levi's and Walmart - said the uncertainty around tariffs over the past few months had already devastated the sector, with orders cancelled and jobs cut.

"We were on the verge of building (our) American market," Teboho Kobeli, founder and managing director of Afri-Expo Textiles, told Reuters at his factory in Maseru.

He said the U.S. market made up 10 per cent of his company's production - about \$1 million a year - and that he had to lay off



▲A worker walks past empty sewing stations that were used by employees who have since been laid off, at a garment factory in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho.

200 workers, or 40 per cent of his workforce, after the announcement in April as orders dried up.

"That is a lot lost," he said.

Lesotho, which Trump had ridiculed in March as a country "nobody has ever heard of", is a poor and landlocked country with a gross domestic product of just over \$2

billion.

Trade Minister Mokheleli Shelile said that Lesotho would struggle to compete against other African textile manufacturers such as Kenya and Eswatini, which got a lower U.S. tariff rate of 10 per cent.

"We have close to 12,000 jobs that are directly on the firing line because of this

tariff," he told Reuters.

The sector, which is the country's leading export industry and biggest private employer, was heavily dependent on the Africa Growth and Opportunities Act, a U.S. trade initiative granting duty-free access to qualifying African nations.

It employs around 40,000 people and accounts for roughly 90 per cent of manufacturing exports, according to Oxford Economics. One of the people affected by the uncertainty is Matsoso Lepau, a 48-year-old who lost his job at protective outerwear maker Leo Garments in April.

"I have a big problem because the money that I was making is not there anymore," he said, adding he used to earn the equivalent of \$167 a month.

"Now that Mr Trump has lowered the tariffs, I am still hoping that we will get our jobs back."

Kobeli, the head of Afri-Expo Textiles, said he was confident he could get his business back on track now that the reduced 15 per cent rate has been set, noting the uncertainty over U.S. trade policy had weighed on investors' and retailers' decisions globally.

"It was a global problem, even the buyers in America were stagnant as they did not know where to go... Now with the 15 per cent we are starting to talk, it's not like we were affected alone," he said. (Reuters)

## SA outlines support measures in response to US tariffs

By Nellie Peyton

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa on Monday outlined support measures for local companies that will be hit by a 30 per cent U.S. tariff this week, including exemptions from some competition rules and financial support facilities.

It also dismissed speculation that its failure to negotiate a lower tariff was because of its local affirmative action policies, which U.S. President Donald Trump has criticised.

Africa's biggest economy has tried for months to negotiate a deal with Washington, offering to buy U.S. liquefied natural gas and invest \$3.3 billion in U.S. industries in a "framework deal" proposed to Trump's team.

But the effort was unsuccessful, even after Pretoria made a last-minute attempt to improve its offer.

South African officials say the U.S. tariff could cause tens of thousands of job losses, especially in the agriculture and carmaking industries, as Trump pushes to reshape global trade in favour of the United States.

Addressing a press conference, South Africa's trade and foreign ministers said a "block exemption" from some aspects of the Competition Act was being developed that would allow competitors to collaborate and coordinate.

They said the exemption would be published by the end of this week.

The government is also working on a support programme, which will include a working capital facility and plant and



▲The South Africa flag and the word "Tariffs" are seen in this illustration.

equipment facility, and ways to cushion the impact of job losses via the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

The ministers said South Africa posed no "trade threat to the U.S. economy nor its national security," emphasising that its exports supported the U.S. industrial base and often do not compete with U.S. products.

Foreign affairs minister Ronald Lamola did not want to focus on speculation the country faces such a high tariff because of points of tension with the U.S. like its policies to address racial inequality or genocide case against Israel at the World Court, which Trump opposes.

He said South Africa would continue to engage with U.S. counterparts on the basis of the framework deal it had submitted.

Trade officials said an export support desk would try to help companies enter new markets by linking them up with embassies and potential buyers. A more detailed set of support measures will be discussed at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday. (Reuters)



▲South African Rand coins are seen in this illustration.

## Rand starts week muted as traders await tariff updates

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand was softer in early trade on Monday ahead of a briefing by the country's ministers of trade and foreign affairs where they will provide updates on progress made in negotiating a trade pact with the United States.

At 0633 GMT the rand traded at 18.0525 against the U.S. dollar, about 0.2 per cent weaker than Friday's close.

South African goods will be subjected to a 30 per cent duty when imported in the U.S., the highest rate among Sub-Saharan African countries. Pretoria has been trying to get Washington to reduce the rate, saying it could harm tens of thousands of jobs.

Trade minister Parks Tau and foreign minister Ronald Lamola are set to update the nation on the issue later on Monday.

"Our foremost priority is protecting our export industries. We will continue to

engage the U.S. in an attempt to preserve market access for our products," President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a newsletter on Monday.

South Africa should accelerate the diversification of export markets by deepening intra-African trade, he said.

"We will in due course be announcing the modalities of a support package for companies, producers and workers that have been rendered vulnerable by the U.S. tariffs," Ramaphosa said.

The dollar index, which tracks the currency against a basket of major peers, was slightly stronger in Monday trade. It fell more than 1 per cent on Friday following weak U.S. jobs data that sent traders scrambling to price in aggressive Federal Reserve interest rate cuts.

South Africa's benchmark 2035 government bond was marginally stronger in early deals, as the yield rose one basis point to 9.615 per cent. (Reuters)

# Tesla approves share award worth \$29bln to Elon Musk

By Aditya Soni

TESLA has granted CEO Elon Musk shares worth about \$29 billion in a new pay deal aimed at keeping the billionaire entrepreneur at the helm during a crucial pivot from its struggling core auto business to robotaxis and humanoid robots.

The company described the “interim award” of the 96 million new shares as a first step, “good faith” payment to honor Musk’s more than \$50 billion pay package from 2018 that was struck down by a Delaware court last year. Musk can claim the new award if he remains in a top executive role for another two years and a court does not reinstate the 2018 package currently on appeal.

He has to hold the shares for five years and can buy them for \$23.34 per share, the same as the exercise price of the 2018 award. Tesla will also put to vote a longer-term CEO compensation plan at its annual investor meeting on November 6.

The move is meant to keep Musk, the public face of Tesla and architect of its robotaxi strategy, focused on the electric-vehicle maker as it navigates a shift to cybercabs and robotics from its mainstay auto business.

It also seems to quell any speculation that the board’s patience with Musk could be wearing thin because of the recent tumultuous months, including the CEO’s foray into politics.

The move to give Musk greater control of the company suggests that directors still see him as best-suited to tackle Tesla’s growing list of challenges in the years ahead.

Sales have been falling at the company due to its aging vehicle line-up, tough competition and Musk’s right-wing political stances that have tarnished its brand.

S&P Global Mobility data shared exclusively with Reuters showed on Monday that Tesla’s brand loyalty had plunged since Musk endorsed U.S. President Donald Trump last summer.

Musk’s involvement in politics and his wider business empire, including AI startup xAI, have also sparked concerns about his devotion to Tesla, the main source of his wealth. Musk has threatened to leave unless he gets more control over Tesla.

The new stock award will take his Tesla



▲Elon Musk, Chief Executive Officer of SpaceX and Tesla and owner of Twitter.

stake, already the largest, to more than 15 per cent from the 12.7 per cent currently, according to Reuters calculations based on data compiled by LSEG.

Before Monday’s grant, Musk had no active compensation plan and Tesla said he had not received meaningful pay since 2017. With the legal fight over his 2018 package expected to continue, the board said it moved to retain Musk’s “extraordinary talent.”

### Talent magnet

“While we recognize Elon’s business ventures, interests and other potential demands on his time and attention are extensive and wide-ranging... we are confident this award will incentivize Elon to remain at Tesla,” said a special committee Tesla formed this year to consider Musk’s compensation. It consists of chair Robyn Denholm and independent director Kathleen Wilson-Thompson.

The company said it would not record compensation expense for the award as it does not currently expect the performance condition to be “probable of being met.” It will re-evaluate and recognize the expense if it determines the award is likely to be met, including after the two-year vesting period.

The new shares will also be forfeited or offset if the Delaware courts fully reinstate the 2018 stock award, ensuring there is no “double dip,” the special committee said.

Investors and analysts welcomed the news, with Tesla shares rising nearly 2 per cent in early trading. The stock has lost a quarter of its value this year, as of last close.

“Under normal circumstances, a compensation package in the billions would

raise some eyebrows. (But) clearly investors have benefited from Musk’s stewardship of Tesla,” said Camelthorn Investments adviser Shawn Campbell, who owns Tesla shares. “This stock grant will bind Musk to Tesla for the next two years.”

### Battle for pay

The Delaware ruling on Musk’s 2018 pay package, the largest in Corporate America, had cited flaws in the board’s approval process and unfairness to investors. Musk kicked off an appeal against the order in March, claiming a lower court judge made multiple legal errors in rescinding the record compensation. He has argued that the package resulted in spectacular growth for Tesla and yet was determined by the lower Court of Chancery to be unfair to shareholders, who voted twice to approve the plan.

Tesla shares have risen nearly 2,000 per cent over the past decade, far outperforming the around 200 per cent rise in the benchmark S&P 500 index in the same period.

“This is simply a repackaged version of what was done years ago and was ruled improper by a judge. It renders the Delaware court decision effectively meaningless,” said Charles Elson, founding director of the Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance at the University of Delaware.

“You don’t have to incentivize him to stay. If he leaves, he throws away 13 per cent of the company, which is still a huge part of his net worth, said Elson, who had filed amicus briefs supporting the court’s decision to void Musk’s 2018 award. (Reuters)



▲A screen displays the logo of Spotify.

## Spotify to raise prices

SPOTIFY said on Monday it would increase monthly price of its premium individual subscription in select markets from September, as the Swedish streaming giant looks to improve margins.

The subscription price will rise to 11.99 euros (\$13.86) per month from 10.99 euros in markets including South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region.

Spotify said subscribers will receive an email explaining the price rise over the next month.

Price increases in the past, combined with cost-cutting efforts in recent years, have helped it to achieve its first annual profit for 2024.

The company saw an increase in monthly active users and premium subscribers during the second quarter, while higher taxes related to employee salaries led it to post a loss during the period and weighed on its third-quarter profit forecast.

Spotify has been expanding its library of video content to attract subscribers, including through its partner program, which is designed to help podcast creators by offering them monetization options.

A growing number of creators are joining the Spotify Partner Program, resulting in a significant increase in video content on the platform, CEO Daniel Ek had earlier told Reuters.

The streaming company is also benefiting from Apple’s approval of its U.S. app update to show subscription prices and external payment links, after a judge barred the iPhone maker from charging commission on off-app purchases.

Ek said this change has led to “a very positive uptick” in the U.S. If similar rules are adopted in Europe and the UK, it would benefit both Spotify and other app developers. (Reuters)

## Google agrees to curb power use for AI data centers to ease strain on US grid when demand surges

massive amounts of electricity - fast.

Google’s agreements with Indiana Michigan Power and Tennessee Power Authority would involve scaling back power use at the technology giant’s data centers when called upon by the electric utilities to free up space on the grid.

They are the first formal agreements by Google in demand-response programs with utilities to temporarily curtail its machine learning workloads, a subset of artificial intelligence.

“It allows large electricity loads like data centers to be interconnected more quickly, helps reduce the need to build



▲The Google logo.

new transmission and power plants, and helps grid operators more effectively and efficiently manage power grids,” Google said in a blog post.

Demand-response programs have typically been used by other energy-intensive industries like heavy manufacturing or cryptocurrency mining. In exchange, the businesses generally receive payments or reduced power bills.

The programs involving AI activity in data centers is generally new, and details of the commercial arrangements between Google and the utilities were not clear.

While demand-response agreements apply only to a small portion of demand on the grid, the arrangements might become more common as U.S. electricity supply tightens. (Reuters)

NEW YORK — Google has signed agreements with two U.S. electric utilities to reduce its AI data center power consumption during times of surging demand on the grid, the company said on Monday, as energy-intensive AI use outpaces power supplies.

Utilities in the country have been inundated with requests for electricity for Big Tech’s AI data centers, with demand eclipsing total available power supplies in some areas.

That power crunch has led to concerns about spiking bills for everyday homes and business and blackouts.

It has also complicated the technology industry’s expansion of AI, which requires

# Funding for refugees in Uganda will run out next month, UN warns



▲ A UN worker monitors Congolese refugees who fled from the Democratic Republic of Congo by boat across Lake Albert, upon arrival at United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in settlement camp in Kyangwali, Uganda.

By Olivia Le Poidevin

GENEVA — Emergency funding to help hundreds of thousands of refugees in Uganda will run out next month unless more support comes in, a United Nations agency said on Monday.

A funding crisis is threatening programmes for people fleeing there from strife-torn countries in the region including Sudan, and Uganda's neighbours South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN refugee agency UNHCR said.

"Emergency funding runs out in September," Dominique Hyde, the agency's Director for External Relations, said in a statement.

"More children will die of malnutrition, more girls will fall victim to sexual violence, and families will be left without shelter or

protection unless the world steps up."

UNHCR and other UN agencies face one of the worst funding crises in decades, compounded by U.S. and other donor states' decisions to slash foreign aid funding.

Uganda is home to 1.93 million refugees, more than a million of them under 18, according to UNHCR figures.

An average 600 people are still coming in every day and the overall figure, already the largest in Africa, is due to rise to 2 million by the end of the year, the agency says.

It said it would only be able to meet a third of the costs associated with supporting Sudanese refugees in Uganda - and would have to cut its monthly funding to \$5 per refugee from \$16 unless more money is found.

Malnutrition rates are rising as food, water, and medicine supplies shrink, while the risk of suicide is increasing among young refugees due to a reduction in mental health staff, the agency added. (Reuters)

RABAT — U.S. President Donald Trump has reaffirmed support for Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara, saying a Moroccan autonomy plan for the territory was the sole solution to the disputed region, according to state news agency MAP.

The long-frozen conflict pits Morocco, which considers the territory as its own, against the Algeria-backed Polisario Front, which seeks an independent state there.

Trump at the end of his first term in office recognised the Moroccan claims to Western Sahara, which has phosphate reserves and rich fishing grounds, as part of a deal under which Morocco agreed to normalise its relations with Israel.

His secretary of state, Marco Rubio, made clear in April that support for Morocco on the issue remained U.S. policy, but these were Trump's first quoted remarks on the dispute during his second term.

"I also reiterate that the United States recognises Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara and supports Morocco's serious, credible and realistic autonomy proposal as the only basis for a just and lasting solution to the dispute," MAP quoted

## Trump reaffirms support for Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara

Trump as saying in a message to Morocco's King Mohammed VI.

"Together we are advancing shared priorities for peace and security in the region, including by building on the Abraham Accords, combating terrorism and expanding commercial cooperation," Trump said.

As part of the Abraham Accords signed during Trump's first term, four Muslim-majority countries agreed to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel after U.S. mediation.

In June this year, Britain became the third permanent member of the U.N. Security Council to back an autonomy plan under Moroccan sovereignty for the territory after the U.S. and France.

Algeria, which has recognised the self-declared Sahrawi Republic, has refused to take part in roundtables convened by the U.N. envoy to Western Sahara and insists on holding a referendum with independence as an option. (Reuters)



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump.

## 'Nigeria's July oil output tops 1.8 million bpd'

By Isaac Anyaogu

LAGOS — Nigeria's oil production surpassed 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, with current average output at 1.78 million bpd, the head of the country's upstream regulator said on Monday.

The West African country, Africa's largest oil producer, relies on crude oil for nearly two-thirds of government revenue and over 80% of foreign currency earnings, making production gains critical for stabilising its economy.

But widespread oil theft, unrest and years of underinvestment curtailed output and strained public finances before Nigeria stepped up a crackdown in the oil-rich Niger Delta region.

Gbenga Komolafe, chief executive of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, told delegates at an energy conference that the output increase, largely possible due to the step-up in security operations, is part of a push to boost oil production by 1 million bpd to 3 million bpd.

Oil output last reached 1.8 million bpd in November. Komolafe said the commission would continue working with stakeholders to sustain production gains and improve industry transparency. (Reuters)



▲ Cranes sit at an oil rig facility, in Lagos Nigeria.

# Israel to decide next steps in Gaza after ceasefire talks collapse

By Maayan Lubell

JERUSALEM — Benjamin Netanyahu will convene his security cabinet this week to decide on Israel’s next steps in Gaza following the collapse of indirect ceasefire talks with Hamas, with one senior Israeli source suggesting more force could be an option.

Last Saturday, during a visit to the country, U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff had said he was working with the Israeli government on a plan that would effectively end the war in Gaza.

But Israeli officials have also floated ideas including expanding the military offensive in Gaza and annexing parts of the shattered enclave.

The failed ceasefire talks in Doha had aimed to clinch agreements on a U.S.-backed proposal for a 60-day truce, during which aid would be flown into Gaza and half of the hostages Hamas is holding would be freed in exchange for Palestinian prisoners jailed in Israel.

After Netanyahu met Witkoff last Thursday, a senior Israeli official said that “an understanding was emerging between Washington and Israel,” of a need to shift from a truce to a comprehensive deal that would “release all the hostages, disarm Hamas, and demilitarize the Gaza Strip,” - Israel’s key conditions for ending the war.

A source familiar with the matter told Reuters on Sunday that the envoy’s visit was seen in Israel as “very significant.”



▲Smoke rises from Gaza as the sun sets, as seen from the Israeli side of the Israel-Gaza border.

But later on Sunday, the Israeli official signalled that pursuit of a deal would be pointless, threatening more force:

“An understanding is emerging that Hamas is not interested in a deal and therefore the prime minister is pushing to release the hostages while pressing for military defeat.”

### “Strategic clarity”

What a “military defeat” might mean, however, is up for debate within the Israeli leadership. Some Israeli officials have suggested that Israel might declare it was annexing parts of Gaza as a means to pressure the militant group.

Others, like Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister

Itamar Ben-Gvir want to see Israel impose military rule in Gaza before annexing it and re-establishing the Jewish settlements Israel evicted 20 years ago.

The Israeli military, which has pushed back at such ideas throughout the war, was expected on Tuesday to present alternatives that include extending into areas of Gaza where it has not yet operated, according to two defence officials.

While some in the political leadership are pushing for expanding the offensive, the military is concerned that doing so will endanger the 20 hostages who are still alive, the officials said.

Israeli Army Radio reported on Monday that military chief Eyal Zamir has become

increasingly frustrated with what he describes as a lack of strategic clarity by the political leadership, concerned about being dragged into a war of attrition with Hamas militants.

A spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) declined to comment on the report but said that the military has plans in store.

“We have different ways to fight the terror organization, and that’s what the army does,” Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani said.

On Tuesday, Qatar and Egypt endorsed a declaration by France and Saudi Arabia outlining steps toward a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which included a call on Hamas to hand over its arms to the Western-backed Palestinian Authority.

Hamas has repeatedly said it won’t lay down arms. But it has told mediators it was willing to quit governance in Gaza for a non-partisan ruling body, according to three Hamas officials.

It insists that the post-war Gaza arrangement must be agreed upon among the Palestinians themselves and not dictated by foreign powers.

Israel’s Foreign Minister Gideon Saar suggested on Monday that the gaps were still too wide to bridge.

“We would like to have all our hostages back. We would like to see the end of this war. We always prefer to get there by diplomatic means, if possible. But of course, the big question is, what will be the conditions for the end of the war?” he told journalists in Jerusalem. (Reuters)

## South Korea starts removing anti-North Korean loudspeakers on border

By Ju-min Park

SEOUL – South Korean authorities began removing on Monday loudspeakers blaring anti-North Korea broadcasts along the country’s border, Seoul’s defence ministry said, as the new government of President Lee Jae Myung seeks to ease tensions with Pyongyang.

Shortly after he took office in June, Lee’s administration switched off propaganda broadcasts criticising the North Korean regime as it looks to revive stalled dialogue with its neighbour.

But North Korea recently rebuffed the overtures and said it had no interest in talking to South Korea.

South Korea’s dismantling of the loudspeakers from Monday is just a “practical measure to help ease tensions between the South and the North,” the ministry said in a statement on Monday.

Soldiers could be seen unplugging loudspeakers, mounted together like a wall, and taking them down, photographs provided by the defence ministry show.

The countries remain technically at war after the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce and relations have deteriorated in the



▲South Korean soldiers work on a loudspeaker that is set up for propaganda broadcasts during a military drill near the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas in Paju, South Korea.

last few years.

Propaganda broadcast through loudspeakers across the border has been used by both sides as relations between South and North Korea have ebbed and flowed over the years.

In 2018, the then President Moon Jae-in dismantled the loudspeakers as his administration agreed to stop every hostile act that could be a source for military tensions.

But last year former conservative leader

balloons to the South filled with trash amid heightened tensions.

Since Seoul suspended its own loudspeaker broadcasts in June, North Korea appears to have stopped its broadcasts, which had disturbed South Korean border residents for months, officials in the South say.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, recently said, however, that South Korea’s decision to stop the broadcasts was “not the work worthy of appreciation”. (Reuters)

### U.S. TARIFF TALKS

## EU to suspend countermeasures for 6 months

BRUSSELS — The European Union will suspend its two packages of countermeasures to U.S. tariffs for six months following a deal with U.S. President Donald Trump, a Commission spokesperson said on Monday.

The EU-U.S. agreement leaves many questions open, including tariff rates on spirits, and Trump’s executive order last week setting tariffs on most EU goods at 15% did not include carve-outs such as for cars and car parts.

EU officials have said they expect more executive orders to follow soon.

“The EU continues to work with the U.S. to finalise a Joint Statement, as agreed on 27 July,” the spokesperson said in a statement.

“With these objectives in mind, the Commission will take the necessary steps to suspend by 6 months the EU’s countermeasures against the US, which were due to enter into force on 7 August.”

The retaliatory tariffs are in two parts: one in response to U.S. steel and aluminium duties, and the other to Trump’s baseline and car tariffs. (Reuters)

# Boldwin Bals to headline ECOFEST

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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BOTSWANA comedy star Boldwin Bals has been announced as the first headliner of the second edition of the Eswatini International Comedy Festival (ECOFEST), set to take place on September 26, 2025.

This highly anticipated event will be an unforgettable evening filled with laughter and entertainment, showcasing a blend of local and international comedic talent. Boldwin Bals, a seasoned Motswana comedian and event host, began his comedy journey in 2016 with a spontaneous open mic set. Nearly a decade later, he stands as one of Botswana's most recognised names in stand-up comedy, performing on major stages and co-founding the Gaborone Comedy Club. Known for his sharp wit, lively delivery, and strong stage presence, Boldwin is expected to bring an electrifying performance to the festival, delivering jokes that resonate and laughter that lingers.

Tickets for ECOFEST 2025 are already on sale, allowing comedy enthusiasts to secure their spots early. Early bird tickets are priced at E120 and can be purchased exclusively through Delta Pay. Pre-sale tickets will be available for E150, while tickets bought at the gate will cost E200. This annual event will take place at the Sibane Sami Hotel in Ezulwini.

ECOFEST was founded by the charismatic comedian Bonginkosi Dlamini, affectionately known as Dr. Shakes. Dlamini's vision for the festival is to showcase comedic talent across Southern Africa while highlighting local and emerging artists. "This year, 2025 marks the 2nd edition of ECOFEST, and we aim to make it bigger and better than the inaugural event," Dlamini stated,



▲ Botswana comedy star Boldwin Bals.

emphasising the festival's growth and its significance in the entertainment calendar of Eswatini.

## Festival

One of the most exciting developments for this year's festival is the introduction of a comedy search aimed at uncovering local talent from one of the universities in the country. This initiative will provide a selected student comedian with unique opportunity to share the stage with renowned international acts. Dlamini expressed his commitment to nurturing local talent, saying, "We want to give our local comedians a platform to showcase their skills alongside established performers. It's

about creating opportunities and fostering growth in our comedy scene."

ECOFEST 2025 is set to feature an impressive lineup of comedic acts from various countries, including China, Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, and, of course, Eswatini. Dlamini promises that this year's edition will be "bigger, better, and bolder than ever before." He hinted at an exciting array of comedians, with further details to be revealed in the lead-up to the event. "If you thought last year was good, wait until you see what we have planned for the 2nd edition. This year's festival will be an evening rich in humour, stand-up brilliance, and a lively atmosphere," he said.

## Sgitha's One Man Show slated for Zhumiao Lounge

ZHUMIAO Lounge is gearing up for an electrifying night as it prepares to host the highly anticipated One-Man Show featuring renowned Eswatini DJ Sgitha.

Scheduled for Saturday, August 9, 2025, starting at 5 pm, this event promises to be a spectacular showcase of talent and creativity, highlighting Sgitha's evolution as an artist. The One-Man Show will not only spotlight Sgitha but will also feature an impressive lineup of supporting acts, including DJ Chomzin, DJ Mshayi, DJ Phara, and DJ Biggie. These talented DJs are expected to set the stage ablaze, creating an atmosphere filled with vibrant energy and infectious rhythms.

Tickets for the event are priced at E30 before 8 pm, increasing to E50 thereafter, making it an accessible outing for music lovers across the region. With the promise of a night filled with unforgettable performances, attendees are encouraged to arrive early to secure their spot and enjoy

the full experience.

In a recent interview, Sgitha expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming show, emphasising its significance in showcasing his growth as an artist. "Growth, nothing more but growth of my craft and brand, especially from other regions besides the Mbabane and Manzini corridor," he stated. Sgitha is known for his dynamic performances and ability to engage with the crowd, and he promises that this show will be no different. He hinted at a "fire set" that would leave attendees exhilarated and perhaps even a little reckless. "People should come witness for themselves who Sgitha Wama 2 000 is. It is going to be an unforgettable night. I might as well play a two-hour set," he added.

Sgitha's One Man Show is more than just a concert; it represents a significant moment for local talent in Eswatini. By organising such events, artists like Sgitha are not only promoting their careers but also contributing to the growth of the local music scene.



▲ DJ Sgitha.



▲ Gospel artist Kayise Mloni Zondo.

## Kayise Mloni Zondo to host 'Icilongo Levangeli Timeless Worship'

ESWATINI gospel musician Kayise Mloni Zondo is poised to host a remarkable event titled "Icilongo Levangeli Timeless Worship," scheduled for August 5, 2025.

The event will occur at the Kwaluseni Assembly of God, starting at 6 pm. With presale tickets priced at E80 and E100 at the gate, this concert promises to be a significant gathering for worshippers and music lovers alike. Zondo, known for her soulful voice and deep connection to gospel music, shared the news of the upcoming event on her social media platforms, generating excitement among her followers.

"Kayise Mloni Zondo presents Icilongo Levangeli Timeless Worship - a call back to the deep, sacred sound of the hymns that shaped generations," she announced, emphasising the event's focus on the cherished hymns that have been integral to many people's spiritual journeys.

The inspiration for this concert stems from the treasured 'Icilongo Levangeli' hymn book, a collection that holds a special place in the hearts of many. Zondo explained that these hymns are not merely melodies but serve as spiritual anchors for countless individuals. "These timeless hymns still stir hearts across every church and denomination. This is more than a show. It's a revival. A call to remember," she expressed.

## Concept

The concept of "Icilongo Levangeli Timeless Worship" is rooted in the belief that music has the power to transcend time and connect people to their faith. Zondo encourages attendees to "bring your hymn and join us in worship that never grows old," inviting everyone to participate in a collective experience that celebrates the richness of gospel music.

Zondo's commitment to reviving traditional hymns aligns with a broader movement within the gospel music scene, where artists are increasingly recognising the importance of honouring the past while also creating space for contemporary expressions of worship. This event serves as a reminder of the enduring legacy of hymns and their ability to resonate with new generations.

# Eemoh headlines ‘Afterwork Chillout’ at Mdzimba View

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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SOUTH African musician, Eemoh is poised to deliver an unforgettable performance at Mdzimba View Shisanyama.

Known for his infectious hit ‘Ngishutheni,’ Eemoh will headline the Afterwork Chillout event, set for August 8, 2025, alongside the dynamic entertainer Vulela Ma Weekend. This highly anticipated gathering is set to showcase a vibrant lineup, featuring notable artists such as Blaqace, Sbuda, Castle, Tilungu, Mzoro, and MaWillies, among others. For those eager to experience this musical extravaganza, ticket prices are structured to accommodate various preferences. General admission tickets are available for E100 before 9 pm and E150 thereafter. For those seeking a more exclusive experience, VIP tickets are priced at E250 before 9 pm and E300 after the cutoff time. This pricing strategy ensures that fans can enjoy the event at a range of price points, making it accessible to a broad audience. Nqubeko Mbuliso Shangase, widely recognised as Eemoh, has emerged as a significant figure in the South African music scene. Born on July 23, 1999, in the serene town of Untunjambili, Kranskop, located in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Eemoh has quickly risen to prominence within the Amapiano genre. His journey in music has been marked by a series of collaborations with some of Southern Africa’s most influential artists, producers, and DJs.

His collaborations with prominent figures such as De Mthuda, Master KG, DJ Maphorisa, and Da Muziqal Chef have resulted in a string of hits that have captivated audiences across the region. Notable tracks like ‘Impumelelo,’ ‘Ithuba,’



▲ South African musician Eemoh.

and the remake of ‘Dubula’ have solidified his reputation as a formidable talent.

However, it is his track ‘Sgudi Sync’ that has truly catapulted Eemoh into the limelight, showcasing his unique sound

and artistic flair. This track has not only topped charts but has also become a cultural phenomenon, resonating deeply with fans and establishing Eemoh as one of Amapiano’s most exciting new talents.

## All eyes on As 4 Jerry P’s ‘Mlentengamunye’

NEWLY signed artist As 4 Jerry P’s latest release, ‘Mlentengamunye,’ released under the record label Upscale Live, has reached 50,000 YouTube views in three weeks.

Notably, these numbers are for the visualiser. The official audio has over 33,000 views on YouTube, with Spotify streams for the song sitting at over 26,000. Commenting about the song’s success, he said “Kubonga kwami kuncane, I didn’t expect so much love on my first single, Wadla Mlentengamunye.” Known to his supporters as Bhungu Lemhlolo, the artist has been generating buzz ever since he shared a snippet of the song, and fans can expect its official release this coming Friday. As 4 Jerry P describes ‘Mlentengamunye’ as a deeply spiritual song that is intricately linked to Swazi culture. “Mlentengamunye is a spiritual song linked to Swazi culture dating back to the days when our forefathers were migrating down to where we are today,” he explained in a recent interview.

He elaborated on the song’s significance, stating, “Mlentengamunye was the cloud they were following to this promised land.” The artist draws a poetic connection to King Somhlolo, an ancient ruler who had a vision and solution for his people. “By following his remarks, I had to transform my music style into a unique Afro Trap style which combines modern beats with oral traditions, thus creating a powerful bridge



▲ As 4Jerry P.

between contemporary music and Swazi culture,” he added.

### Message

The message behind ‘Mlentengamunye’ resonates deeply with As 4 Jerry P, as it reflects a journey of self-discovery and cultural heritage. “The message behind the song is about a journey where I follow the cloud (Mlentengamunye) to my promised land, just as our forefathers did,” he said. He emphasised that the song is not just a musical endeavour but a spiritual experience that embodies his pride liSwati.

Creating this unique sound was not a challenge for the artist; rather, it was a natural evolution of his musical journey. “It commenced when I was watching Bob Marley’s documentary and fell in love with his ragaestyle dance moves,” he revealed. Inspired by Marley, he felt a strong desire to blend his trap style with reggae elements. “On the very same evening, I saw my producer SeimeStonesdpr posting a sample of the beat I strictly wanted. I texted him and convinced him so bad that I want the beat, though it was ordered,” he recounted.



▲ Jumbo Festival director Jumbo Khumalo.

## Jumbo Festival tickets now on sale

THE countdown has officially begun for one of Eswatini’s most anticipated events, the Jumbo Festival, with tickets now available for purchase at [www.thejumbofest.com](http://www.thejumbofest.com).

Scheduled for November 29, 2025, this vibrant celebration will be a spectacular showcase of talent, ambition, and community spirit, making early ticket purchases highly recommended to secure a spot at this must-attend event. Festival founder Jumbo Khumalo passionately describes the Jumbo Festival as more than just a night out; it is a celebration that honours praiseworthy personalities across the nation. “The Jumbo Festival is an event that celebrates and honours praiseworthy personalities in the country. By saying ‘See You at the Top,’ we challenge people to work hard and achieve their goals so they can be celebrated,” Khumalo stated. This powerful message resonates deeply, especially with hustlers, small business owners, young professionals, and the youth, as it aims to recognise those who are pushing boundaries and motivating others to reach for greatness. This year’s festival introduces an exciting new twist: a karaoke session that invites audience members to step onto the stage and showcase their talents. “The audience will have the opportunity to get on stage and perform,” Khumalo emphasised, highlighting that the event is not just for spectators but for everyone to take part and shine.

### Experience

In addition to the karaoke, the iconic red-carpet experience will make a grand return, allowing guests to dress up, pose for the cameras, and enjoy a touch of glamour. The red carpet has become a hallmark of the Jumbo Festival, providing an opportunity for attendees to feel like stars for the evening. This glamorous aspect of the festival not only enhances the overall experience but also fosters a sense of community and celebration among attendees.

While the full entertainment lineup remains under wraps, attendees can expect electrifying performances by top local musicians, showcasing the rich musical talent that Eswatini has to offer. Organisers have also hinted at the presence of special guests from South Africa, which is sure to heighten the excitement surrounding the event. The blend of local and international talent promises to create an unforgettable musical experience that will resonate with festivalgoers.

# Cops launch manhunt after kidnapping of Amapiano stars Jazzworx, G.L Ceejay

POLICE are looking for suspects in the kidnapping of Amapiano stars Jazzworx, real name Kamohelo Monese, and Gobokweone Lekganyane, better known by his stage name G.L. Ceejay. Gauteng police spokesperson Lieutenant-Colonel Mavela Masondo said: “Police can confirm that a case of house robbery has been opened and an investigation is underway. No arrests have been made yet; police are still searching for the suspects.”

The popular musicians released a heartfelt public statement on Monday detailing a traumatic ordeal.

The Uzizwa Kanjani hitmakers said their home in Klippoortjie, Germiston, was invaded on Sunday, during which they were robbed and, unfortunately, kidnapped.

Sandile Moloane, the stars’ manager, confirmed the kidnapping to Sunday World. “They were kidnapped, and the people who kidnapped them took them and our studio equipment. They intentionally made it clear that they want the studio and what is in the computer,” said Moloane.

**Rescued in Katilehong**

After the harrowing experience, they were safely found and rescued early on Monday morning in an abandoned house in Katilehong, east of Johannesburg, and had sustained minor injuries on their heads.

Expressing deep gratitude, Jazzworx and GL Ceejay thanked their fans and supporters for the outpouring of concern and prayers during their ordeal.

“We are currently receiving medical attention and support as we begin the process of healing physically, emotionally, and psychologically. We ask for privacy and understand-

ing as we focus on recovery and rebuilding our strength,” reads the pair’s statement.

The statement also acknowledged the swift action of law enforcement authorities, with the artists expressing heartfelt appreciation for their diligent efforts.

They noted that a picture of one of the perpetrators will be circulated as the investigation continues.

**Album release on track**

Despite the ordeal, the two remain hopeful, vowing to continue their craft with peace, love, and dedication.

Fans will be delighted to discover that their eagerly awaited album remains scheduled for release in September. In a previous interview with Sunday World, Jazzworx said: “We’re putting our hearts into every track, and we hope one day our work gets to the international stage.”

Their upcoming album, The Most Wanted, is a step toward that vision, blending Amapiano, Afro-tech, deep house, and their signature 3-step sound.

(Sunday World)

▲ Police are looking for suspects in the kidnapping of Amapiano stars Jazzworx, real name Kamohelo Monese, and Gobokweone Lekganyane, better known by his stage name G.L. Ceejay.



▲ American singer Summer Walker.

## Summer Walker fires back at body-shaming trolls

AMERICAN singer Summer Walker took to Instagram recently as she clapped back at online users who were making fun of her body and claiming that she has a botched BBL.

She wrote via her Instagram stories that despite the negative comments about her body, she loves it and won’t be changing anything about it.

“I love my body with a fiery burning passion. Please get over it. I’m not changing or reducing anything. Idk (I don’t know) why it would bother you if we’re not intimate & you don’t even know me in real life, but please block me if it offends you or keep scrolling,” Walker said.

She further added that if she does not invest her time or energy into people she does not like, then why are people doing that if they do not like her? This comes after the “Playing Games” singer shared a fun TikTok video wearing a Dior swimsuit, which showcased her body. This video was met with a lot of backlash online as online users made remarks about her body and claimed that her BBL looks just as bad as the person she was making fun of just a month ago.

In June, Walker mocked South African reality TV star, Wandi Ndlovu’s BBL last month via her Instagram stories and shared a side-by-side picture of Ndlovu’s real body being photoshopped to chicken thighs.

While the multi-award winning singer found the post funny, netizens did not and instead turned things around as they also made fun of her BBL.

A few days later, Ndlovu shared a conversation between her and the singer, who clarified that she shared the post because she thought it was funny.

“Girl, I just wanna say that I think you’re beautiful and yo body looks great, I don’t know who you are but I just thought it was hilarious that someone photoshopped roasted seasoned chicken thighs on someone lmao like that’s so ridiculous. “All I do is repost funny s\*\*\*t on my finsta, I accidentally posted it on my main, but it was nothing directed towards you,” she said.

However, despite her body making headlines recently, Walker is set to come to South Africa in October as she is headlining the “Rocking The Daisies” music festival and also performing at the “In The City” concert in Pretoria.

(Bang Showbiz)

## Dr Rebecca Malope moved to tears at the Basadi in Music Awards

MULTI-AWARD-winning gospel artist Dr Rebecca Malope continues to receive flowers for her contribution and impact on the South African entertainment industry.

At the fourth Basadi In Music Awards, the legendary musician received the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented to Malope by Hloni Modise-Matau and her longtime friend and legendary musician Linah Ngcobo, who was honoured the previous year.

Award-winning musician Ntokozo Mbambo brought Malope to her feet as she sang a medley of the gospel icons’ greatest hits. Malope was surprised by the performance and told the audience that Mbambo is her favourite artist. “She did amazing”. The 57-year-old was brought to tears as a video played that celebrated her journey from how she entered the entertainment industry, when she won talent search competition “Shell Road to Fame”.

Moments from her career played as her industry friends and colleagues paid tribute to her journey. In her acceptance speech, Malope reflected on what it means to her to be celebrated at home and went on to acknowledge how far women have come in the once male-dominated industry.

“Thank you so much. It’s an honour, really humbling to receive this award from you guys. This is love, now I know how much I am loved in my country.



▲ Multi-award-winning gospel artist Dr Rebecca Malope continues to receive flowers for her contribution and impact on the South African entertainment industry.

“Looking back, we came into this industry where it was male-dominated, but today, here we have voices. We are our own bosses today and we pay their rents, we hire them and pay them salaries.” Malope was left speechless, and did not write a speech for

the big moment but thanked South Africans for allowing her into their homes, buying her music and putting her on the globe. “They still behind me, they still put bread on my table. Thank you South Africa.”

IOL Entertainment

What Is a Personality Disorder?

THESE mental health conditions affect your everyday life and relationships. They're about how you think, feel, and act.

You might have a tough time with change, or you may be impulsive or suspicious. You might even do or say things other people find odd or upsetting, making it harder to connect. These long-term patterns can harm your personal and work life as well as your mental health. And you don't always know if you have one.

Paranoid Personality Disorder

With this condition, you feel that people are always trying to take advantage of you, even when there's no logical reason for it. You may get angry when someone questions you, or not want to tell people about yourself because you think they'll somehow use it against you. All this can make it hard to trust others and build healthy relationships.

Schizoid Personality Disorder

This condition can make it hard to express your emotions. You might show little or no reaction if someone yells at you or sings your praises -- this can make you come across as "cold." You may find it hard to feel pleasure and have little interest in sexual relationships. Others may think you lack goals or ambition.

Schizotypal Disorder

You may have strange beliefs -- that you can read people's minds, for example -- and your clothes may be odd or messy. You might not react to things that make most people emotional and often doubt or suspect others' intentions. People may not know how to respond to your rambling and unclear conversation. You might be really anxious around people outside your immediate family and prefer to be alone.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

You may try to make others angry, trick them, or treat them badly to get what you want. You may not care what's right or wrong. You may lie and do things that are reckless, violent, and even illegal. You usually don't feel bad when you hurt others, and drug and alcohol abuse may be problems, too. People with this condition often have a hard time keeping a job or taking care of their families.

Borderline Personality Disorder

You may have strong feelings of anger, sadness, or anxiety that suddenly change. You may frantically try to connect with someone if you think they want to separate from you. You swing between extremes: A friend may be "perfect" one day and awful the next. This makes for intense, rocky relationships. You can act impulsively -- drug abuse, reckless driving, or risky sex, for example -- if you don't have a strong sense of who you are.

Histrionic Personality Disorder

Your desire to be noticed is stronger than every other feeling. You probably have good social skills, but you use them to make yourself the center of attention. You don't

# Guide to Personality Disorders



seem interested in other people. You may be too concerned about how you look, and dress sexy to attract people even when it's not appropriate. You may act like you're on stage, with over-the-top emotions and speech that changes very quickly.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

You want to make yourself look good, even if you must hurt or ignore others to do it. You may brag a lot or pretend to be

someone you're not, or stop people who want to have their say, especially if you think you're more important. You may get angry when you don't get treated the way you want. Inside, you're insecure, oversensitive, and may lash out if criticized. You get moody and depressed if someone makes you feel less than perfect.

Avoidant Personality Disorder

No one wants to look foolish, but with

this condition, you'd rather be alone than take even the smallest risk that someone will reject you or make you look bad in front of others. You may make problems bigger than they need to be, find it hard to try new things, and see yourself as unattractive. This can make you afraid to connect with others and very uncomfortable in large groups.

Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

A desire to control people, tasks, or situations is at the core of this disorder. Your attention to rules, details, and order can be extreme. You may find it hard to relax or like you have to do everything yourself. You may judge other people harshly.

This isn't the same as obsessive-compulsive disorder, where a pattern of unreasonable thoughts can lead you to do something over and over, like wash your hands too much to avoid germs.

Dependent Personality Disorder

You may be too clingy because you hate to be apart from those you're closest to. The thought they could leave forever causes serious fear. You don't have a lot of confidence and aren't eager to try new things. Even everyday decisions can be hard as you feel you need approval from others first. When a romantic relationship ends, you often start a new one right away. And you may put up with abuse from someone just to keep them around.

Do I Have One?

You probably won't know it on your own. People with personality disorders often don't believe it. You may find out only after you get help for something else, like anxiety or depression, or if someone suggests you start therapy and you go. Because people with these conditions often manage well enough to get by -- though they may have a hard time with relationships -- many never get the help they need.

Diagnosis

Doctors ask questions to learn if parts of your personality are so strict that they harm your relationships at home and at work. They also check how well you control your impulses and see if your view of yourself matches reality. You might have some symptoms without having one of these conditions. Only a professional can tell if you have a personality disorder.

Treatment

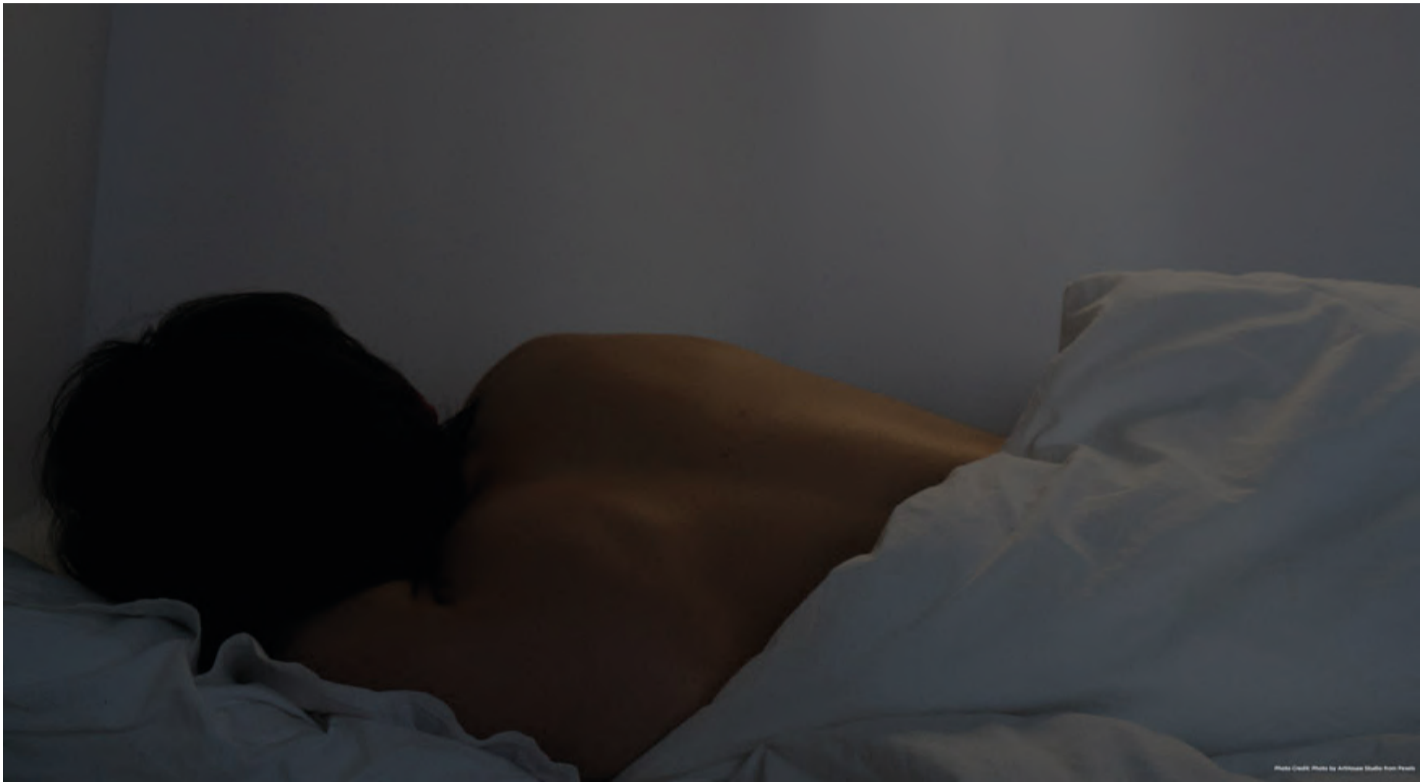
These conditions can be intense, constant, affect lots of parts of your life, and be hard to manage. But you can get help. The most common method is talk therapy. You talk with a mental health professional who helps you see -- and change -- patterns of thinking and behavior that cause you problems. Over time, this can help you deal with stress and with other people in a healthier way.

What About Medications?

None are specifically approved to treat personality disorders. But some drugs may help with serious symptoms. In that case, your doctor might prescribe one of these in addition to therapy:

- ▶ Antidepressants
- ▶ Mood stabilizers
- ▶ Antipsychotic medicines
- ▶ Anti-anxiety meds, except for people with certain personality disorders.

Healthline



# A little darkness can be good for you

NATURE can be a form of therapy — even when you spend time with it in the dark. “Dark nature” activities like stargazing and moonlit hikes can spark feelings of connectedness and awe, which may offer mental health benefits.

You might often hear about the benefits of spending a little time under the sun, as our bodies make some vitamin D this way. But what about spending some time outside in the dark? Research shows that this might also be beneficial.

What the research says

Try to recall a time when you went outside at night and glanced up at the sky. What did you feel in that moment? Connectedness? Awe?

Recent studies may help explain the benefits of these emotions on mental wellness.

Connectedness

A 2024 study developed a Night Sky Connected Index (NSCI) to measure people's connection to the night sky. The researchers interviewed participants to develop the NSCI, and to test it, they selected 406 people from the general population. One of the many findings of this study was that a higher NSCI score is associated with greater scores of mental well-being and happiness. Particularly, nature connectedness, or the relationship you hold with the natural world, may help predict well-being, as another study also suggests.

Awe

Nature is often a source of awe, which is a feeling you might be familiar with when



looking up at a sky full of stars. According to a 2022 research review, experiencing this emotion can help improve:

- ▶ emotional, social, and psychological well-being
- ▶ levels of anxiety, stress, depression, and PTSD
- ▶ physical health
- ▶ symptoms of autoimmune disorders
- ▶ heart health
- ▶ life span

A study from 2018 also suggests that college-age students who had nature experiences demonstrated more awe, which was associated with improved well-being.

Dark nature activities

Dark nature activities can be a form of ecotherapy, which focuses on the healing power of nature. Beyond stargazing, other opportunities to spend time with nature in the dark include nighttime walks or moonlit hikes and having a bonfire or campfire.

Safety first

If you plan to do any activities in the dark, make sure you follow safety guidelines. For example, if you plan to take a nighttime stroll, wear reflective clothing so others can see you and bring a flashlight. If you want to start a campfire, make sure you're familiar with any city or park regulations.

The takeaway

Just as spending time in the sun and nature can have health benefits, hanging out in the dark while still connecting with nature can, too. Dark nature activities, such as stargazing, moonlit hikes, or nighttime walks, can have the effects of ecotherapy. This may include improved mental well-being. So, while an after-dinner walk might be beneficial, you might also want to consider going on after-dark walks.

WebMD



### Interest Rate

6.75%

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) maintained the interest rate at **6.75 per cent**.

### What does this mean?

Banks are expected to maintain the prime lending rate on loans extended to individuals and businesses at **10.25 per cent** until the next monetary policy meeting.

### Inflation

2.9%

Headline inflation decreased to **2.9 per cent** in June 2025 from **3.2 per cent** in May 2025.

### What to expect?

The CBE expects the cost of goods and services to increase moderately in 2025. The Bank revised down its inflation forecast for 2025 to 3.49 per cent (from 3.66 per cent forecasted in May 2025).

### Economic Activity

Eswatini's Quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) recorded a year-on-year decline of 0.3 per cent (seasonally adjusted) in the first quarter of 2025, compared to a revised growth of 1.7 per cent in the previous quarter.

## Monetary Policy Statement

1 August 2025

On the 1st August 2025, the Central Bank of Eswatini (Bank), together with the Monetary Policy Consultative Committee (MPCC) held a meeting to consider the appropriate monetary policy stance. Taking into consideration relevant global, regional, and domestic economic factors; as well as the price and financial stability mandate, the Bank decided to maintain the discount rate at 6.75 per cent.

On the global front, the IMF has marginally revised up the economic growth outlook to 3.0 per cent (from 2.8 per cent forecasted in April 2025) for 2025 and 3.1 per cent (from 3.0 per cent) for 2026. Economic growth in advanced economies has been revised up by 0.1percentage point for both 2025 and 2026 to 1.5 per cent and 1.6 per cent respectively. Growth in emerging markets and developing economies has been revised up to 4.1 per cent (from 3.9 per cent) for 2025 and 4.0 per cent (from 3.9 per cent) for 2026. Global headline inflation depicts mixed trajectories, and the IMF kept the global inflation outlook steady at 4.2 per cent for 2025 and 3.6 per cent for 2026. Interest rates have somewhat eased, and the IMF broadly projects further cuts before the end of the year.

On the regional front, the South African economy expanded by 0.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2025, quarter-on-quarter, following a growth of 0.4 per cent in the previous quarter. The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) revised down its growth forecast to 0.9 per cent (from 1.0 per cent forecasted in May 2025) for 2025 and 1.3 per cent (from 1.5 per cent) for 2026. South Africa's inflation slightly increased to 3 per cent in June 2025 from 2.8 per cent in the previous month. The SARB kept its inflation forecast steady at 3.3 per cent for 2025 while the medium-term forecasts were reviewed down to 3.3 per cent (from 4.2 per cent) for 2026 and 3.0 per cent (from 4.4 per cent) for 2027. The SARB reduced the repo rate from 7.25 per cent to 7.0 per cent during its 31st July 2025 meeting.

On the domestic front, Eswatini's quarterly gross domestic product recorded a year-on-year decline of 0.3 per cent (seasonally adjusted) in the first quarter of 2025, compared to a revised growth of 1.7 per cent in the previous quarter. This negative growth performance was largely driven by poor performance in the primary sector which contracted by 7.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2025 from a growth of 7.2 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024 and the secondary sector which also contracted by 10.2 per cent in the quarter ended March 2025, from 4.5 per cent in the previous quarter. The tertiary (services) sector, rebounded strongly with a year-on-year growth of 7.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2025, up from 0.4 per cent in the previous quarter. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, economic activity grew by 0.5 per cent (seasonally adjusted), from a revised contraction of 1.6 per cent in the previous quarter.

Headline consumer inflation eased to 2.9 per cent in June 2025 from 3.2 per cent in May 2025. This disinflation was largely driven by declining price pressures in key categories, namely; 'food & non-alcoholic beverages' index which grew by a slower 2.3 per cent in June 2025 from 3.2 per cent in the previous month, 'transport' index which registered a 0.3 per cent deflation in June 2025, from 0.5 per cent in May, and the index for 'restaurants & hotels' which recorded a decline of 8.5 percentage points. Counteracting the above downward pressures were increases in the price indices for 'housing & utilities' which grew by 0.5 of a percentage point to 4.2 per cent in June 2025 and 'household furniture & maintenance' which increased from 2.0 per cent to 3.0 per cent. The Bank revised down its short-term inflation forecast to 3.49 per cent (from 3.66 per cent forecasted in May) for 2025 on account of a lower food inflation outturn, stronger exchange rate assumption and the lower oil prices. In the medium term, the Bank revised down its inflation forecast to 3.95 per cent (from 4.05 per cent) for 2026 and 3.71 per cent (from 3.92 per cent) for 2027.

Credit extended to the private sector marginally decreased by 0.05 per cent month-on-month to close at E21.6 billion in June 2025. Credit to the business sector fell by 2.2 per cent month-on-month to E11.7 billion at the end of June 2025 and credit extended to other sectors of the economy also contracted by 2.9 per cent to E1.0 billion over the review period. The banking sector's loan book registered an improvement month-on-month as none performing loans (NPLs) fell by 1.9 per cent to close at E1.3 billion in June 2025. The NPL ratio rose by 0.3 percentage points year-on-year to reach 7.0 per cent in June 2025.

As of 25th July 2025, gross official reserves stood at E11.8 billion equivalent to an import cover of 3.0 months. At the end of June 2025, total public debt stood at E38.4 billion from E36.6 billion in May 2025, depicting an increase of 4.9 per cent. At this level, it is equivalent to 40.2 per cent of GDP.

In taking the decision, the Bank cautiously considered the credibility of the peg against the South African Rand and the need to ensure adequate gross official reserves. The Bank will continue to monitor international, regional and domestic developments that influence the movements of inflation and will act appropriately in line with its mission to foster price and financial stability that is conducive to the economic development in Eswatini. Furthermore, the Bank is currently reviewing its policy toolkit and will announce in due course other policy actions that will be taken to support the Bank's mandate.

Dr. Phil Mnisi  
GOVERNOR



# PSL viewership surpasses two World Cup finals

**PREMIER Soccer League (PSL) chairman Irvin Khoza revealed the staggering viewership numbers of PSL matches that have even surpassed the Fifa World Cup and the Rugby World Cup finals.**

Khoza mentioned that the 2022/23 MTN8 final between Orlando Pirates v Mamelodi Sundowns, and last season's Nedbank Cup final between Kaizer Chiefs and the Buccaneers, had attracted the highest viewership in the history of the PSL.

In the October 2023 final, Pirates defeated Sundowns 3-1 via penalties after a goalless draw, while Amakhosi nailed Pirates 2-1 in the Ke Yona final in May. Both finals were played at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban.

"I cannot stop talking about the achievements we have made in terms of making sure that the content that we produce becomes more attractive. Again, I want to juxtapose the success of the PSL – when Pirates played against Sundowns in the final of the MTN8, they achieved a viewership of 9.5-million viewership, which was an unbelievable achievement," said Khoza. He revealed the mind-blowing numbers at the 2024/25 PSL Awards, where the league's and cup tournament best performers were honoured and bestowed with accolades and trophies.

Last year, Khoza mentioned to selected journalists that when the Buccaneers defeated the Brazilians in that 2023 final, the viewership surpassed that of the final of the



▲ Premier Soccer League (PSL) chairman Irvin Khoza.

2023 Rugby World Cup between the Springboks and New Zealand in France, which the Boks won.

"In the 2024/25 Nedbank Cup final between Chiefs and Pirates, the viewership was 9.9 million, bigger than the 2022 Fifa World Cup final between Argentina and France [in Qatar].

"This tells the story that from the soccer

content that we produce, we have a product, and the challenge that remains for us is how we manage the product.

"The PSL will be coming up with a product guide, to make sure that we do not lose the trend, which is showing upward movement, or that we do not lose our success story of 40 years ago when we started," added Khoza.

(Sunday World)

## Bok props in demand: Louw, Du Toit on the move?

**SPRINGBOK props Wilco Louw and Thomas du Toit are allegedly being hunted by two South African franchises.**

Louw is currently on contract with the Bulls in Pretoria, while Du Toit is employed by Bath Rugby in England. Both men have featured for the Boks this season, though Du Toit is currently not part of the squad that will feature against Australia in the first two matches of this year's Rugby Championship, due to resting protocols.

Louw, however, could be the first-choice tighthead option in the absence of Frans Malherbe during the Rugby Championship.

According to Sunday publication Rapport, the Stormers are keen to contract Louw, who has a deal to stay with the Bulls until the end of next season.

The 31-year-old previously also played for the Stormers and also featured for Toulon and Harlequins before returning to South Africa and the Bulls in 2023. He has played 18 Tests.

The Stormers' current first-choice tighthead is Neethling Fouche, who made his Bok debut this year.

Rapport also said on Sunday



▲ Wilco Louw, left, and Thomas du Toit, right, are allegedly being pursued by the Stormers and Sharks.

that the Sharks are interested in getting Du Toit back to Durban, where the 30-year-old played before leaving South Africa after the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

Du Toit's versatility — he can play loosehead and tighthead — make him much sought-after. According to Rapport Bordeaux in France are also interested in his services. The Sharks' current prop department includes World Cup winners Ox Nche and Vincent Koch. (The Citizen)

## Appollis chuffed with dream start to Pirates career

**OSWIN Appollis was understandably delighted after the perfect start to his Orlando Pirates career in the 2-0 MTN8 quarterfinal win over Polokwane City on Saturday.** Appollis scored the opening goal at Orlando Stadium in the 13th minute against the side Pirates signed him from ahead of the new season.

The 23 year-old then and then won a penalty that Patrick Maswanganyi netted in the 35th minute to set up a semifinal showdown with Mamelodi Sundowns.

Pirates' Appollis – 'Credit to the whole team'

"It was a very positive result and I am happy for today," said the Bafana forward, who was given the Man-of-the-Match award.

"But most importantly I have to give credit to the whole team. Everyone worked hard and all the stuff we did in pre-season came together." A sell-out crowd packed into Orlando Stadium to cheer Abdelsam Ouaddou's Buccaneers team on.

"It was amazing to see a packed stadium," and I am very happy to be at Pirates," added Appollis.

"We must continue to work in training and to do our best."

Orlando Pirates will have the

week to prepare for their DStv Premiership opener on Saturday at home to Sekhukhune United.

Eric Tinkler's Sekhukhune also reached the MTN8 semifinals, with a 3-2 win over TS Galaxy on Saturday.

It was a fantastic start to his Sekhukhune career for Bradley Grobler, who joined after his former club SuperSport United sold their status to Siwelele FC.

The 37 year-old showed that age is just a number as he bagged a brace at the Peter Mokaba Stadium, as Sekhukhune came back from 2-0 down to seal a brilliant win. They will now face Stellenbosch FC in the semifinals.

'Exciting new chapter'

Mpho Mvelase and Victor Letsoalo put Galaxy 2-0 up. But Grobler headed home from a corner just before half time. And then he levelled after the break, stabbing home a Linda Mntambo cross at the near post. A bad slip at the back from Galaxy then allowed Vusumzi Mncube to steal in and grab a well-taken winner.

"Couldn't have asked for a better start to an exciting new chapter," tweeted Grobler after the match.

(The Citizen)



▲ Theminkosi Lorch.

## Lorch not in coach Cardoso's plan at Sundowns

**THEMBINKOSI Lorch appears to have no future at Mamelodi Sundowns, with sources indicating the former PSL Footballer of the Season is not part of head coach Miguel Cardoso's plans.**

Lorch was among the first casualties following Cardoso's arrival last December, having been loaned to Wydad Casablanca just a month later.

Rushine de Reuck also departed during the same window, joining Israeli side Maccabi Petah Tikva on loan. Lorch impressed during his stint at Wydad, particularly with his performances at the FIFA Club World Cup, sparking speculation that he could be reintegrated into the Sundowns setup. However, Phakaaathi understands that Cardoso remains unconvinced and is looking to move in a different direction.

The 32-year-old failed to report for pre-season, prompting the Sundowns hierarchy to explore possible exit options. Having signed from Orlando Pirates in a high-profile switch in January 2024, Lorch's move to Chloorkop has ultimately failed to live up to expectations. He is currently training on his own while plotting his next move, which is believed to be in North Africa.

Cardoso, who has consistently expressed a preference for a smaller squad, has already approved de Reuck's switch to Simba SC in Tanzania. Lorch is expected to be the next to leave as Sundowns continue to trim their squad for the new season with other big-name players expected to depart the Chloorkop-based side. (The Citizen)



▲ Lorch was among the first casualties following Cardoso's arrival last December.

# Fernandes critical of ‘lazy’ Man Utd

MANCHESTER United captain Bruno Fernandes let rip at his teammates following their 2-2 pre-season draw with fellow Premier League side Everton, saying their performance was “lazy” and calling for further reinforcements.

A second-half goal from Mason Mount had United on course for victory in Atlanta, Georgia after Fernandes’s opener was cancelled out by Iliman Ndiaye, but a bizarre 75th-minute own goal by Ayden Heaven gifted Everton the draw on Sunday.

The draw put a slight damper on the Old Trafford club’s tour of the United States, after promising victories over West Ham United and Bournemouth last month.

“It’s been important for developing how we want to play and getting the new players involved too,” Fernandes told NBC Sports.

“We didn’t want to finish in this way. Our performance wasn’t the best and we were a little bit lazy today. We want to avoid that because with laziness you can pay at any moment.”

United had their worst-ever Premier League campaign in the 2024-25 season, finishing 15th in the standings, and are looking to strengthen in the transfer window, signing Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumo - both of whom started against Everton.

“It’s improving. But it’s not the place it needs to be. I don’t want to take a dig at anyone but the club is doing the best they can in terms of the financial situation they talk about,” Fernandes said.



▲ Manchester United’s Bruno Fernandes.

“But it was crystal clear we needed more competition for the players that were here, more quality to get everyone to step up a little more to get to the XI, and I think that is what the club are trying to do.

“Hopefully we can get one or two players more to help with that.”

Asked about Fernandes’s comments, manager Ruben Amorim told reporters: “I think I’m happy for the players to have that feeling. It’s saying that they understand the

situation. So, it’s a good feeling.

“I think the momentum of the tour was perfect. We had the weeks to work with a good environment, good feeling, and then we go back to Carrington (training ground) and we are near to start the season.

“We are going with the feeling that we need to do a lot of things (better).”

United begin the new Premier League season against Arsenal on August 17.

Reuters

## Inter Miami calls Lionel Messi’s leg injury ‘minor’

A return date for Lionel Messi to the Inter Miami lineup is uncertain, but the Herons announced Sunday that the superstar’s right leg injury isn’t serious.

Messi came out of Miami’s Leagues Cup match against Necaxa on Saturday in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in the 11th minute, shortly after getting hurt in a collision with two opponents.

After Messi underwent medical tests, the team issued a statement on Sunday that read, in part, “The results confirmed a minor muscle injury in his right leg. His medical clearance will depend on his clinical progress and response to treatment.”

In Messi’s absence, Inter Miami rallied late to equalize the match at 2-2, then prevailed 5-4 in a tiebreaking penalty-kick shootout.

Through two Leagues Cup matches, Miami sits in second place in the MLS standings with one regulation win and one shootout win, good for five points. The top four of the 18 MLS clubs in the competition will advance to the quarterfinals, where they will be joined by the top four of the tournament’s 18 Liga Mx clubs.

The Herons conclude the group phase with a Wednesday home match at Pumas UNAM.

Inter Miami resumes MLS regular-season action on Aug. 10 at Orlando City.

Messi, 38, has 18 regular-season goals this year, tied for the MLS lead with Nashville



▲ Inter Miami CF forward Lionel Messi.

SC’s Sam Surridge. In Leagues Cup play, he assisted on both of Miami’s goals in a 2-1 opening win over Atlas on Wednesday.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

An eight-time Ballon d’Or winner and a 2022 World Cup champion with Argentina, Messi is in his third season with Inter Miami.

Reuters

## FIFA faces class action over player transfer regulations

A Dutch soccer players’ group is preparing a “potentially billion-dollar” Europe-wide class action claim against FIFA and other associations, seeking compensation over alleged loss of income due to restrictive transfer rules, it said on Monday.

The Dutch Foundation for Justice said world soccer governing body FIFA’s rules had affected approximately 100,000 players in European member states and the United Kingdom since 2002.

The foundation added that consultancy firm Compass Lexecon had estimated that damages could run into billions of euros, with the foundation’s board member Dolf Segaar telling Dutch news agency NOS that “it is a billion-dollar claim”.

The Dutch Football Association (KNVB) is among the associations to be named in the suit.

“This case is being brought in the Netherlands under the Dutch Act on the Settlement of Mass Damages in Collective Action (WAMCA), which allows this legal action to be launched by JfP on behalf of a large group of professional footballers,” it added.

FIFA and the KNVB did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment.

Reuters



▲ Novak Djokovic.

## ATP relocating tournament from Serbia to Greece

THE ATP Tour announced Monday that the Nov. 2-8 tournament in Belgrade, Serbia, is relocating to Athens, Greece.

No official reason was given. Serbian media reported that Novak Djokovic and his family, who run the tournament, are behind the move.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion recently expressed his support for students protesting government corruption in his native Serbia.

Djokovic’s brother, Djordje, has been the director of the ATP 250 tournament in the Serbian capital since 2021.

The tournament in Athens, dubbed the Hellenic Championship, will be played on an indoor hard court at the OAKA Basketball Arena.

“ATP 250 Hellenic Championship is organized by the experienced team behind nine previous international tournaments in Belgrade. This latest project builds on that legacy, with preparations well underway to deliver a world-class event in the historic city of Athens,” read a statement from tournament organizers.

Reuters



▲ General view during a minutes silence in tribute to Liverpool’s Diogo Jota and his brother Andre Silva before the match.

## Boyhood club of Jota, Silva, honour brothers with new kit

THE boyhood club of Portuguese footballers Diogo Jota and Andre Silva have dedicated their kit for this season to the brothers who died in a car crash on July 3 in Spain.

Fourth-tier Gondomar SC have imprinted pictures of Liverpool and Portugal forward Jota and his brother Silva, who played for Portuguese team Panafiel, on the front of their shirts.

The top of the back of the shirts bears the two players’ names under an infinity symbol. “More than a jersey, a tribute eternal,” Gondomar SC, who play in the Campeonato de Portugal, said in a social media post. “Because football is more than victories and goals, it’s legacy, it’s family, it’s love for our land. “Our new jersey brings in the great image of Diogo Jota and his brother Andre Silva, two sons of Gondomar who left us too soon, but who will live forever in the history of our club and our football.

Reuters

Stories by Chris Dlamini

THE Weightlifting Challenge may have been cancelled, but that did not stop the show.

A handful of muscular participants of the WERKIT Aero-Bootcamp, a first for Nhlangano in the Shiselweni Region on Saturday, August 2, was ready to lift the weights for the winner-takes-all E500 prize. However, the E500 prize was removed with the competition called off due to time constraints, among other reasons.

Amid it being called off, the stage was still set up for it, and those willing still tested their toughness. Worthy of note was Ngwane College lecturer, Dr. Mfanisibili Philemon ‘Dr Phil’ Nxumalo and Nontokoza ‘Ozo’ Gumedze.

The duo was unstoppable in the weights and had eyes on them, as others tried joining but proved no competition.

Dr Phil, as Nxumalo is popularly known, lifted to 150kg.

“This is my highest weight to lift ever. I’ve broken my own personal record of 140kg,” he excitedly confirmed.

He said he was ready for the competition, and smashing his own record was evident to that.

Meanwhile, Gumedze, going as Ozo, went as high as 80kg in her squats. She was willing to try even higher, but it turned out 80kg was her best.

“I love challenges, and this is one of them,” she said.

Both Nxumalo and Gumedze did miss out on the intense but fun aerobic session. This all took place at KaMjuda T-Junction Hall.

# WERKIT Aero-Bootcamp: ‘Dr Phil’, ‘Ozo’ gladiators



▲ Aerobics enthusiasts enjoying themselves.

## ‘S’ncobesh’ untouchable in Mlandvo Ladies Pool KO

SHE knows nothing but number one in Eswatini’s pool tables.

That is the best pool or billiards player in the ladies’ division nationally, Ncobile ‘S’ncobesh’ Dlamini. She again showed her class and quality over the weekend when she beat 11 others to the Mlandvo Ladies Pool Knock-out Tournament title.

Dlamini played and outfoxed her national teammate Simphiwe ‘Bhatata’ Dlamini in the final, another gem among the ladies. She took home E1 000 and a trophy for her latest decoration. The runner-up pocketed E600 after she was humbled with a 5-0 margin.

Overall, 12 ladies played in the tournament sponsored by MU and Lee Investment. The tournament was played at Mlandvo Restaurant and Bar, just past Luyengo.

Eswatini Cue Sport Association (ECSA) President Muntu Dlamini commended the sponsor, saying through this tournament, new talent was uncovered as they met three new players who will soon join the national league sponsored by a local company trading as Nongoloza.

**The top four winners:**

1. Noobile ‘S’ncobesh’ Dlamini - E1 000+Trophy 2. Simphiwe ‘Bhatata’ Dlamini - E600 3. Thandiswa Dlamini - E250 4. Irene Mashaba - E250



▲ Sponsor Musa Dlamini with Ncobile Dlamini and Eswatini Cue Sports Secretary Mbongeni Gamedze.



▲ Dr Phil doing 150kg weight.



▲ Nontokoza ‘Ozzie’ Gumedze doing some weights.

## ‘Bharuka’ annihilates ‘Siziba’ in E3k Challenge

It is always one of the biggest fixtures in the domestic game of pool.

A clash between two talented players, Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane and Zweli ‘Siziba’ Dlamini, who grew up in the game as students of decorated seniors Sithembiso ‘Dodge’ Matsebula and Flag Nxumalo, among others, is one not to miss. They faced off in an E3 000 Challenge match on Sunday, August 3, with the winner pocketing every penny.

The match was played at Malkerns Pool Room at 2pm. Bharuka emerged the winner with an unbelievable 11-1

score line. It was race to 12. The score is deceiving as it suggests a one-sided affair, yet it was a very tough and tactical match.

It was the kind of match where one missed shot got punished to a won frame, and Siziba took a lot of such blows.

Those who watched the match can attest it was a matter of Bharuka using his chances well each time Siziba had a misfortune. More such challenges are underway this month, with two fixtures set for Tshaneni between different players.



▲ Eddie ‘Bharuka’ Mondlane.



# FNB Eswatini's E60 000 boost for local golfers

... As FNB Eswatini Golf Challenge is finally here

Stories by Chris Dlamini

THE road to the much-anticipated fourth edition of the FNB Eswatini Challenge is now clearer than ever before.

The bank, as the title sponsor, has ensured valuable practice time and support for the country's professional golfers who will battle it out in the E2 million sponsored golf competition against professionals from across the globe. FNB provided free practice at the Ezulwini Golf Course, managed by the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club at Royal Swazi Sun Hotel.

This will be the first edition to be hosted outside of the Nkonyeni Golf Course, also coming alongside the bank's 30th anniversary serving Eswatini.

It is going down from August 8-9 in the main tournament, but a PRO-AM will precede it from Tuesday, August 5 to Wednesday, August 6.

"FNB Eswatini champions golf and growth. At FNB Eswatini, we believe in more than just banking. We believe in empowering people, unlocking potential, and supporting platforms that bring our communities together.

"That is why FNB Eswatini is proud to once again sponsor the national golf tournament's grand prizes, with an additional contribution of E60 000 aimed specifically at creating practice opportunities for local golfers," the bank's



▲ Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima with FNB CEO Thokozani Dlamini. Nzima is expected to attend the tournament.

Communications Notsile Nkambule said in a write up shared with this publication She said this initiative ensured that qualified local professionals, especially those who might not have access to adequate facilities, are able to train consistently and compete on equal footing. By doing so, they are not

only investing in the sport of golf but also in the future of young and emerging talent across Eswatini.

"The serene greens of Ezulwini Golf Course have come alive in the run-up to the main tournament, as local players make full use of the FNB-sponsored practice slots,"

she added.

Meanwhile, Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Minister Bongani Nzima is expected to grace the final day of the competition on Sunday for the prize ceremony. The overall winner will take home E317 000, while the best LiSwati will earn E30 000.

## ... We're almost ready, thanks to free practice – Eswatini golfers

AFTER FNB Eswatini forked out an extra E60 000 to avail free practice slots to local professionals, the latter have expressed their gratitude.

It is a gesture that will go a long way for the over 12 emaSwati who qualified for the main tournament, which is sponsored to the tune of E2 million. Some of those who utilised the free slots to get acquainted with the Ezulwini Golf Course ahead of the main competition from August 7-9 have spoken out. Meanwhile, in the Pre-Qualifiers early last month, Brendon Rennie, based in South Africa (SA) was the number one of the qualifying professionals.

This what they had to say;

### ► Nhlanhla Mtsetfwa (Professional Golfer)

"Getting free training is something we've never had before, and it's made a big difference. Practising every day helps me fix mistakes and build confidence. I start at 7am, rest a bit, and go again. Sometimes, I go up to 36 holes. It's also helped me get used to walking the course before the tournament. That extra prize for the top LiSwati? I'm claiming it."

### ► Albert Zungu (Professional Golfer)

"Thank you to FNB Eswatini for the free practice. I train almost every day, starting at 7am when the weather is perfect for golf. I believe practice makes perfect. I'm about 80% ready for the tournament, and I'm hopeful I'll be the top LiSwati."



▲ Nhlanhla Mtsetfwa.

### ► Nicholus Vilakati (Professional Golfer)

"We thank FNB Eswatini for giving us this opportunity by sponsoring such a major event. Local sports development is so important, and we're grateful the bank continues to support this tournament. Playing alongside different people gives us valuable exposure. It's both motivating and encouraging for local players."

### THE PRIZES:

- Overall champion - E317 000  
Top 3 EmaSwati:  
1. E30 000  
2. E20 000  
3. E10 000



▲ Albert Zungu.



▲ Nicholus Vilakati.



▲ Best local golfer Brendon Rennie with FNB Eswatini's Mncedzi Ngomane.



# Massive clear-out at Highlanders AM

By Chris Dlamini

A massive player clear-out is expected at capital city giants Mbabane Highlanders AM FC ahead of the new season.

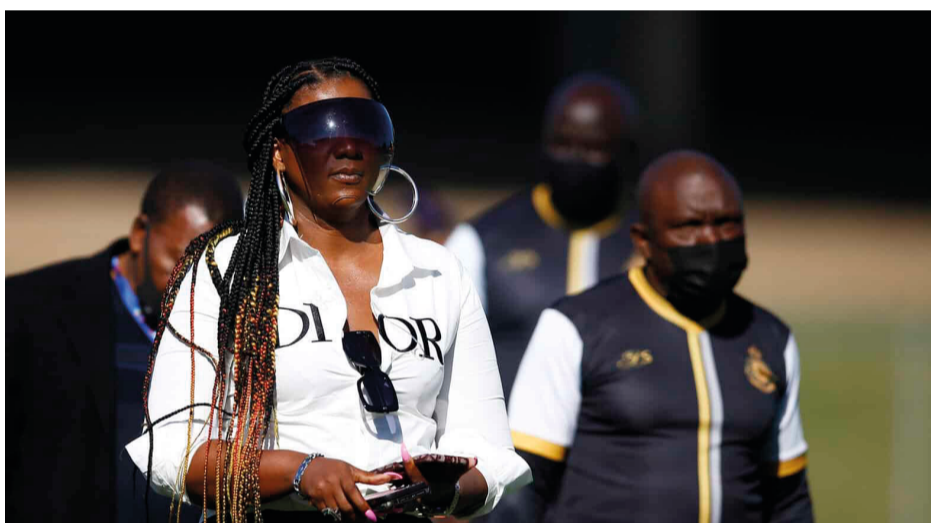
A source close to the matter revealed that the technical bench plans to release several players before the end of the week, with approximately 20 departures expected from the 34 players currently in camp.

"A major overhaul is expected as the technical bench will submit a list of players who made the grade during assessments to General Manager (GM) Richard Makhoba before the end of the week.

"The technical bench including coach Ernest Mavuso has identified new players to join the team, who are expected to travel to Pietermaritzburg this week," the source said.

Makhoba could not be reached for comment on the matter. The club president, Shauwn 'MaMkhize' Mkhize, said they would make announcements of the team during the gathering slated for August 23, 2025 when the camp ends.

"We will share the latest team developments, including new players and coaches, during our gathering on August 23, 2025," she said.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders President Shauwn 'MaMkhize' Mkhize.

Mkhize is being assisted by a two-member board comprising her son, Andile Mpisane, and local businessman Fortune Nxumalo.

The team recently featured in a friendly match against newly promoted Motsepe Foundation Midlands Wanderers.

The crowd pullers' technical bench is headed by former Green Mamba coach Ernest Mavuso. He is assisted by former AmaZulu FC development coach Ronnie Moroka.

The team's legends Phumuza 'El Katib' Ntshangase and Sifiso 'Barnes' Mkhulisi are

also part of the technical bench, albeit on interim basis as the club needed available people to travel with the squad for the preseason camp.

Patrons spokesperson Charles 'Ace' Jele, who doubles as interim club Public Relations Officer (PRO), also confirmed on Monday there were going to squad changes, with outgoing and incomings expected.

Meanwhile, legendary former goalkeeper Siphon 'Shilton' Dube will join the team before the end of the week as goalkeeper coach.

## ... With 'MaMkhize', we will be a force again – 'Bull' captain

By Chris Dlamini

THE glory days will be back.

This is the impression given by Mbabane Highlanders AM Captain Thando Langa. Speaking from Pietermaritzburg through a recorded video posted on the team's Facebook page on Monday, Langa expressed confidence that the new President, Shauwn 'MaMkhize' Mkhize's desire to make Inkunz'emnyama a force once again was in line as they had a proper facility for it for their preseason camp.

"Preparations have been going well since we got here on July 21. The spirit among the guys is very high, and we are looking forward to our first official match in the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup.

"We're building a team at a facility that is very proper. It allows us to fully condition ourselves for the upcoming season," said

Langa.

He went on to say they greatly appreciated having access and exposure to such professional facilities. He did not hide they were certainly hoping for a better season than the position eight they got in the league.

"The message since we got here has been to relive the team's glory days. We promise to do our best with your support.

### Glory

"The President MaMkhize was here the other day and made it clear she was about bringing back the glory days, and that's what we are going to go out for in the new season," he said.

Langa further thanked their supporters for being with them last season, also appealing for more of that this term.

"As players, we will give our best to show that we appreciate your support," he added.

Langa also indicated that they were in constant communication with family back in Eswatini while they were building yet another big family in Pietermaritzburg.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders captain Thando Langa.



▲ Mbabane Swallows' Bonginkhosi 'Karas' Magagula.

## 'Karas' back in 'Birds' nest

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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HOME is where the heart is.

Mbabane Swallows winger Bonginkhosi 'Karas' Magagula has suffered a change of heart by staying put with the red and white glamour side. Magagula was linked with a move to newly promoted sugar belt side Tambankulu Celtics, together with striker Njongo Mazibuko.

A source within the Swallows camp revealed that the player is back in the club.

"Karas is back with the team following his fruitful talks with the management committee. He even travelled with the team during the recent international friendly match against TS Galaxy," the source said.

Swallows Public Relations Officer (PRO) Knowledge Ngwenya could not be reached for comment when sought.

Meanwhile, the capital city giants have been invited to an international pre-season tournament in Angola.

The Friendship Cup will feature eight teams being Wiliete SC from Benguela de Agosto, Luanda City FC, Sagrada Esperança, Interclube, and Académica do Lobito between September 8 -14, 2025, at the São Filipe and Buraco Stadiums in the cities of Benguela and Lobito. The tournament will kick off a day after the conclusion of the 2025 8Bet Trade Fair Cup scheduled to take place from August 30 to September 7 at Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini.

● Karas is back with the team following his fruitful talks with the management committee. He even travelled with the team during the recent international friendly match against TS Galaxy



**Fernandes  
critical of  
'lazy' Man Utd**

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**'Karas'  
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**Sport**

**Massive clear-out  
at Highlanders AM**

**... Close to 20 players set to be released to open space for  
new signings at Capital City giants. *Page 23***