

**COUNTRY'S LANDLOCKED
STATUS NOT A HINDRANCE AS:**

Eswatini making progress — King

By King's Office Correspondents

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN — His Majesty the King has told the conference of LLCs here in Awaza that geography will not define the country's destiny. The King said that through partnerships, innovation and policy coherence, Eswatini will transform its landlocked status into a launchpad for sustainable development. Eswatini is making progress despite the challenges it faces.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

Eswatini establishes diplomatic relations with Turkmenistan

Page 3

ICT Ministry training thousands of young people on STEM

Page 4

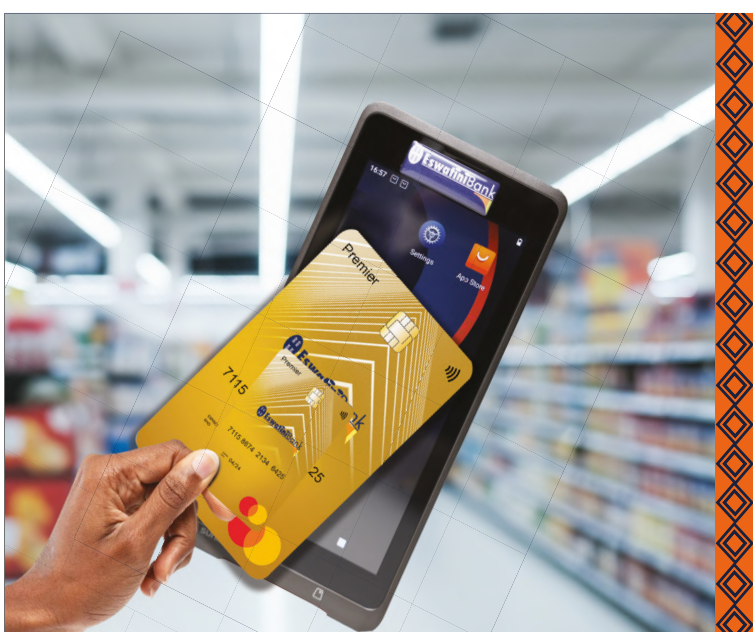


Kwakitsi Foundation donates to Mankayane Home residents

Page 4



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By King's Office Correspondents

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN — His Majesty the King has told the conference of LLCDs here in Awaza that geography will not define the country's destiny.

The King said that through partnerships, innovation and policy coherence, Eswatini will transform its landlocked status into a launchpad for sustainable development.

Eswatini is making progress despite the challenges it faces.

"In the 2024/2025, our economy grew by eight per cent, with momentum continuing into 2025/2026. Sectors like mining and construction are achieving double-digit growth, driving diversification and job creation, for all emaSwati. Through our local revenue collections, stronger SACU receipts, as well as multilateral organisations' programs, our fiscal deficit is narrowing, and public debt is declining," the King said.

He also said tourism has become a major contributor to the country's economic growth. The King said Eswatini's cultural heritage, landscapes, and festivals attract regional and international visitors, with investments in infrastructure and community-led initiatives generating income for rural communities.

"Partnerships are central to Eswatini's strategy. Through active participation in regional and international markets, we advance connectivity and trade. Eswatini has

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ratified the WTO trade facilitation agreement and, with the World Bank, launched a national trade information portal to simplify trade procedures and boost private sector engagement in global markets," he said.

The King said the country welcomes the prospects of establishing an infrastructure investment finance facility for LLDCs to unlock financial resources and create a more conducive environment for sustainable development.

"We call upon financial institutions and developed countries to mobilise funds to bridge the half a trillion-dollar gap for landlocked countries," the King said.

He said the LLDCs must act decisively and collectively to ensure their 606 million citizens, projected to reach one billion by 2060, enjoy a future defined by opportunity, not isolation.

His Majesty said development today is driven by innovation, hence Eswatini's Royal Science and Technology Park cultivates home-grown solutions.



▲His Majesty King Mswati III with the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedow.

"By opening our Innovation and Biotechnology Parks to investors, we aim to become a regional hub for knowledge industries, driving technological change. Eswatini is bridging the digital divide through invest-

ments in broadband, digital literacy, and ICT infrastructure. We are in a drive to improve our e-customs systems to streamline service processes in order to foster regional trade integration," the King said.

Landlocked countries pay twice the costs — HMK

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN — His Majesty King Mswati III has told the 3rd United Nations Conference on Landlocked Development (LLCDs) that they pay twice the transport costs of coastal neighbours, hindering competitiveness and investment.

The conference was attended by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Turkmenistan's President Serdar and other world leaders from LLCDs. The King said this is one of many other challenges faced by Eswatini and LLCDs countries, which include logistical delays, limited market access due to poor infrastructure.

"For Eswatini, being landlocked is not just a geographic condition but a daily development challenge. High transport costs and vulnerability to global shocks slow our progress. Yet, these challenges inspire us to think innovatively and seize opportunities for cooperation," he said.

However, despite these challenges, His



▲His Majesty King Mswati III joined other World Leaders at the 3rd United Nations Conference on Landlocked Development (LLCDs) in Awaza, Turkmenistan.

Majesty the King said the theme for the conference, "Driving progress through partnerships", resonates with landlocked countries' aspirations.

The King said the country prioritises in-

frastructure investment to transform from landlocked to land-linked, enhancing connectivity and reducing trade costs.

"We are upgrading rail lines, streamlining customs procedures, and investing in digital

infrastructure to connect our people, communities and markets efficiently, to mention just a few. These efforts foster regional integration and economic competitiveness," His Majesty said.

He said to build resilience and ensure sustainable growth, Eswatini is diversifying beyond traditional sectors as the country is promoting investment in agro-processing, tourism, renewable energy, ICT, creative industries and private enterprise.

"This strategy broadens our economic base, creates jobs and supports inclusive development, aligning with our national priorities and Agenda 2030 and 2063," the King said.

His Majesty the King said a dynamic private sector is vital for inclusive growth and the Kingdom is fostering an enabling environment for all, including youth, women and marginalised groups through regulatory reforms and entrepreneurship programs, unlocking their potential to drive economic progress and ensure no one is left behind.

Transform the landlocked to land-linked — UN President

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN — The President of the United Nations General Assembly, Philemon Yang, has called for a collective global effort to address the unique challenges faced by landlocked nations.

Emphasising that the struggles of these countries are a shared responsibility, the President urged the international community to transform landlocked countries into "land-linked" nations to ensure no one is left behind.

Yang was speaking at the third UN conference on landlocked Developing Countries, hosted by Turkmenistan, which brought

together delegates from across the globe to discuss the challenges faced by the 570 million people living in 32 landlocked developing countries.

The President expressed deep gratitude to Turkmenistan's national leadership and its people for their warm hospitality and for creating a platform to tackle these pressing issues.

"I am privileged to experience your vibrant culture and rich history," the President said, praising Turkmenistan's pivotal role in the UN General Assembly and its visionary initiative, the Dialogue for Peace, which promotes multilateralism and preventative diplomacy.

The core of the President's speech was a call to action: the challenges of landlocked developing countries are not theirs alone but a global responsibility. "This is not just the struggle of landlocked nations. It is a global responsibility," the President declared.

The conference aims to advance a comprehensive Programme of Action designed to accelerate sustainable development within and across LLDCs.

This plan outlines the next chapter of commitments to address barriers such as limited access to international markets, high trade costs, and infrastructure deficits that hinder economic progress in these nations.

The President underscored the transform-

ative potential of turning landlocked countries into land-linked ones, fostering connectivity through improved infrastructure, trade facilitation, and regional cooperation. This vision aligns with the UN's broader mission to ensure inclusive development worldwide. "Together, we must turn landlocked countries into land-linked countries. That is how we leave no one behind in every part of the world," the President stated.

The conference in Awaza seeks to galvanise international support for LLDCs, which face unique geographic and economic challenges.

By adopting the Programme of Action, delegates aim to set clear strategies for overcoming these obstacles, ensuring that landlocked nations can fully participate in global trade and development.



▲ Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Eswatini Senator Pholile Shakantu with Turkmenistan Foreign Minister Rasit Meredow after signing the protocol establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries.



Eswatini establishes diplomatic relations with Turkmenistan

By King’s Office Correspondent

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN – The Kingdom of Eswatini has signed a protocol establishing diplomatic relations with Turkmenistan, a Central Asian nation bordered by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

The protocol was signed by Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation’s Minister Pholile Shakantu in Awaza on the sidelines of the 3rd United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLCD’s), which is attended by His Majesty the King.

The historic agreement is in terms of the Vienna Convention on Consular

Relations of 1963 and is a significant step in strengthening ties between the two countries which share common goals of economic diversification and development.

Climate

“Turkmenistan is rich in natural gas with experience in desert agriculture something that could benefit Eswatini in light of changes related to climate change in particular drought. Therefore, the two countries will coordinate efforts in sustainable development and peace building,” Minister Shakantu stated in a statement after the signing ceremony with her Turkmenistan foreign Minister Rasit Meredow. The minister noted that “as landlocked countries, Eswatini and Turkmenistan face similar challenges, including vulnerabilities related to trade

and access to global markets, therefore this partnership opens new avenues for cooperation that will benefit our economies and people, fostering growth through shared knowledge and investment.”

She stated that the two nations share memberships in key international organizations, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, and the United Nations. “These common platforms will serve as a foundation for collaborative efforts aimed at addressing mutual challenges and promoting sustainable development. Eswatini looks forward to a productive and lasting relationship with Turkmenistan, leveraging their shared experiences and aspirations to build a stronger future for their citizens,” the minister said.

... Reform global financial system to aid landlocked countries – UN SG Guterres

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN – United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, has called for an overhaul of the international financial architecture to address systemic injustices faced by developing and landlocked nations.

Speaking at the third UN Conference on landlocked countries here, he said; “It is time to overhaul the international financial architecture, provide effective debt relief, ensure access to concessional funding, and enhance the capacity of development banks.”

He argued that the current system, established post-World War II by and for developed nations, marginalises developing countries, leaving them with crippling debt and limited resources to meet their citizens’ needs. This reform, he stressed, is critical to empowering nations to deliver essential services and opportunities.

Guterres highlighted the dual challenges

faced by LLDCs, which suffer not only from the systemic issues affecting all developing nations but also from geographic isolation. Limited access to international markets, costly imports, and uncompetitive exports due to distance and logistical barriers hinder their progress. The Secretary General called for clear international rules to facilitate the free movement of goods and services, alongside infrastructure support in neighbouring countries to ease trade.

The conference is expected to reiterate a Programme of Action, which Guterres described as providing “clear guidelines” for LLDCs to implement strategies to overcome their challenges. It also urges the international community to show solidarity, ensuring these nations are not left behind in global progress. “Landlocked developing countries must benefit from global opportunities, allowing their citizens to fully participate in our interconnected world,” he



▲ United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres.

said.

Guterres framed the conference as a pivotal moment to centre LLDCs in the global development agenda, a topic often neglected. By linking their challenges to broader calls for reform, aligned with initiatives like the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the Pact for the Future, he underscored the urgency of collective action.

New President for LLDC Conference

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN – Serdar Berdimuhamedov, has been elected President of the LLDC Conference.

This took place yesterday during the opening session of the third United Nations LLDC Conference held here.

The LLDC Conference came about following a United Nations General Assembly Resolution 79/233, which was adopted on December 24, 2024. It outlines the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) for 2024–2034, aiming to address the unique challenges faced by 32 LLDCs in Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America, which are home to about 570 million people. These nations face significant barriers to sustainable development due to their lack of direct sea access, high transport and trade costs, inadequate infrastructure, and vulnerability to global crises such as climate change, geopolitical tensions, and pandemics. The Programme builds on the limited progress of the Vienna Programme of Action (2014–2024) and aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework.

The Programme focuses on five priority areas to achieve sustainable and resilient development by 2034:

- **Structural Transformation and Science, Technology, and Innovation:** Aims to diversify economies, enhance productive capacities, and promote industrialization. Targets include doubling manufacturing value added, increasing labor productivity by 50%, and establishing regional agricultural research hubs to boost sustainable agriculture.
- **Trade, Trade Facilitation, and Regional Integration:** Seeks to double LLDCs’ global merchandise and services exports by improving trade facilitation, reducing non-tariff barriers, and enhancing regional trade agreements to integrate LLDCs into global markets.
- **Transit, Transport, and Connectivity:** Focuses on ensuring efficient access to the sea through improved transport infrastructure, including roads, railways, and dry ports. It aims to close missing links, standardize cross-border transit, and enhance air transport and digital connectivity for universal Internet access by 2030.
- **Enhancing Adaptive Capacity and Resilience:** Addresses climate change and disaster risks, targeting the development of national adaptation plans by 2025, strengthening early warning systems, and increasing climate finance to build resilient infrastructure and reduce biodiversity loss.

► **Means of Implementation:** Emphasizes mobilizing domestic and international resources, including official development assistance, foreign direct investment, and remittances, while addressing debt sustainability to support LLDCs’ development goals.

The Programme calls for strengthened partnerships among LLDCs, transit countries, and international stakeholders, with robust monitoring and a midterm review planned for 2029 to ensure progress toward inclusive, sustainable growth and poverty eradication by 2034.



▲ The DPM with representatives from Kwakitsi Foundation whose patron is HRH Princess Temtsimba.



▲ The DPM Thulisile Dladla receiving some of the donated blankets from the princess.

Kwakitsi Foundation donates 40 blankets to support vulnerable residents at Mankayane Home

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela
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HER Royal Highness Princess Temtsimba has once again demonstrated her unwavering commitment to the welfare of the Kingdom's most vulnerable citizens.

Through the Kwakitsi Foundation, she has generously donated 40 luxurious blankets to Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, a gesture that aims to bring warmth and comfort to residents of the Mankayane Home for the Elderly and Disabled.

This initiative not only highlights the importance of community support but also underscores the collaborative efforts

between governmental bodies and charitable organisations in addressing social welfare issues.

The ceremony took place at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, where both Princess Temtsimba and Dladla expressed their shared vision for a more inclusive society. The blankets, which are intended for the elderly and disabled residents of the Mankayane Home, symbolise a commitment to ensuring that no one in the Kingdom feels neglected or forgotten.

In her remarks, Princess Temtsimba emphasised the significance of recognising and valuing the contributions of vulnerable groups within society. "They deserve to know that they are seen, valued, and cared for. This partnership affirms that when

government, foundations, and communities come together, we can create sustainable solutions and meaningful change. The Kwakitsi Foundation remains committed to supporting vulnerable groups, whether through warmth, nourishment, or empowerment initiatives," she stated.

Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, in her response, outlined the critical role her office plays in tackling various social welfare issues, including disabilities, disasters, and family matters. She recounted the emotional realities faced by many individuals during her community visits, revealing the heartbreaking situations where elderly citizens live alone without adequate care. "We witness heartbreaking situations, elderly individuals living alone with no one

to care for them. Through consultations with stakeholders, we accommodate them at Mankayane Home. The same applies to vulnerable persons with disabilities. They will be deeply grateful for these blankets, and I invite your Foundation to join us during the distribution visit," Dladla remarked.

The Mankayane Home for the Elderly and Disabled serves as a sanctuary for those in need, providing not only shelter but also a sense of community and belonging. The donation of blankets is a timely reminder of the harsh realities faced by many, especially during colder months. It is also a call to action for other organisations and individuals to contribute to the welfare of those less fortunate.

ICT Ministry training thousands of young people on STEM

By Tokozani Mazibuko

THROUGH partnerships and strategic investment, the ministry of ICT is training thousands of young people on STEM, with a clear target of reaching 300 000 programmers in the coming years, with at least half of them being young women.

This was revealed by Savannah Maziya, the Minister of Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) on Friday during the Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Expo 2025 held at the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) Sports Emporium, Kwaluseni.

When making her remarks, the minister described the 2025 STEM Expo, as a national celebration of curiosity, creativity, and the promise of the country's youth.

She pointed out that the Expo was not just an exhibition of projects but it was a powerful declaration that Eswatini is serious about preparing its next generation of scientists, engineers, inventors, and innovators.

"Earlier, we heard from our valued partner, Macmillan Education Eswatini, who announced the upcoming launch of the Macmillan Education Everywhere digital platform an innovative tool that will transform the teaching and learning experience for both educators and parents. I want to commend Macmillan for their continued support to STEM in Eswatini, including

... Minister Savannah Maziya described the 2025 STEM Expo, as a national celebration of curiosity, creativity, and the promise of the country's youth.

their remarkable E222 000 contribution this year," she said.

Maziya pointed out that Macmillan Education Eswatini's support helped make National Science Week and Friday's Expo possible, with over 1 183 learners from across the country, including the most remote communities engaging meaningfully in STEM.

"We are encouraged by their insights, particularly the encouraging growth in girls' participation in science and technology fields. As Minister of ICT, one of my deepest commitments this year has been to ensure that no girl is left behind in the journey toward a digital future," she said.

The minister disclosed that in April this year, on the National Day for Women and Girls in STEM, she launched the national STEM Future Pioneers Mentorship Programme, a bold initiative through which over 300 girls and young women were receiving mentorship from seasoned professionals.

She pointed out that this was about more than skills but it was about building confidence, purpose, and ambition in every young woman who aspires to shape her world through STEM.

"I personally pledged to mentor 300 girls, and I am proud that women from across industries rose to the challenge and committed to lifting others as they climb. Together, we are correcting historical imbalances and paving the way for a future where STEM is truly inclusive," she said.

She said alongside mentorship, they were accelerating digital skills training across the country. The minister said through partnerships and strategic investment, they were training thousands of young people with a clear target of reaching 300 000 programmers in the coming years, with at least half being young women.

"Already, we have over 100 girls exploring fields like space science and Artificial Intelligence (AI) areas that were previously considered out of reach. We are introducing young people to coding, robotics, and emerging technologies, not just in cities but in communities that have long been underserved. This is about creating future-ready citizens, who can compete globally and innovate locally," the minister said.

The minister stated that they have also launched the Youth Digital Skills Programme, converting public libraries into digital training hubs. She said more than 2 300 young people have enrolled, and hundreds have earned globally recognised certifications from Lavumisa to Pigg's Peak.

She said these youth now possess skills that can help them secure jobs, support their communities, or launch their own tech ventures. He added that this programme prioritises rural youth, young women, and persons with disabilities because they believe that innovation must be inclusive, and opportunity must not be determined by geography.

"In February, we celebrated National Sci-

ence Week under the theme "Igniting Curiosity, Inspiring Innovation." The projects I witnessed from our young innovators were simply extraordinary from solar-powered purification systems to AI-based community health apps," the minister said.

She said the theme was not just a slogan, but it captured the spirit of this generation: inquisitive, solution-driven, and full of promise.

The minister stated that Friday's Expo builds on that momentum. She said it was clear from the displays at the Expo that the pupils did not only understand STEM, but they were also applying it to solve real problems. She said that was the kind of learning that transforms lives and economies.

"Colleagues and friends, we are standing at the frontier of something great. Our youth are ready. The ideas are already here. What remains is for us as leaders, educators, partners, and parents – to continue creating the platforms, the policies, and the partnerships that nurture this brilliance," she said.

The minister urged educators to continue guiding and inspiring the pupils to embark on STEM related fields. She further called upon the private sector to join the ministry in investing in youth innovation.

Furthermore, she encouraged parents to encourage your children to explore STEM boldly as well as the pupils to believe in their power to invent, to lead, and to uplift their communities.

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

Immunisation campaign targets over E150 000 children

THE nationwide vaccination campaign aimed at protecting children against measles and rubella kick-started on a positive note in the Manzini region yesterday with over 2 000 children coming for immunisation.

This was confirmed by Nursing Sister in Charge for the Manzini Region, Sithembile Mabuza.

According to Mabuza, the vaccination exercise started on a high note in the Manzini Region as in each vaccination centre, they did not record less than 80 children which were immunised against measles and rubella yesterday.

She pointed out that they had divided the Manzini region into two divisions namely; Manzini RFM sub-division and Mankayane zone sub-division.

She stated that at the Manzini RFM sub-division, they managed to immunise 1373 children while at Mankayane zone sub-division 660 children were vaccinated, constituting a total of 2 033 children that were immunised in total in the Manzini region yesterday.

Mabuza mentioned that one glaring challenge that they encountered on their first day of carrying out the exercise was the influx of parents, who came out in their numbers to have their children immunised against measles and rubella.

She pointed out that the teams were structured in a way that they had to administer the vaccine in one centre from 9



▲ A young girl getting vaccinated.

am until 12 noon and then move to the next site to commence with the exercise from 1pm until 4pm.

“However, due to the influx, we could not

manage to move to the next site on time,” she said.

She added that while carrying out the exercise, men who had brought their

children for immunisation were given a special treatment as they were not made to wait in the queues just like the females.

He stated that this was meant to encourage men to overcome the societal stigma surrounding males ferrying their children to the vaccination centres for immunisation purposes.

She mentioned that as part of the vaccine, children were receiving the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine, the Polio vaccine as well as Vitamin A supplementation and albendazole for deworming.

Meanwhile, this comes after the ministry of health in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced a nationwide vaccination campaign aimed protecting children against measles and rubella.

The campaign which was launched recently started running from yesterday until August 15, 2025 and targets over 150 000 children aged between 9 months and five years across the country.

The campaign has already reached communities such as Mangwaneni in Manzini, Moneni, Ngwane Park, Sicelweni, Mobeni and Mbikwakhe to name just a few, with more areas across the country to be covered.

NAMBORD implements import ban on tomatoes and beetroot

THE National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBORD) has announced a full restriction on the importation of tomatoes and beetroots.

The border restriction will come into effect on Monday, 11 August 2025.

The commodities affected by this restriction are, Tomatoes and Beetroots.

These vegetables will not be permitted entry into the country through any official port of entry or informal border crossing from the effective date until further notice.

According to NAMBORD, the restriction is a result of an excess supply of both tomatoes and beetroots in the local market.

The domestic agricultural sector has produced quantities that exceed current demand, and continued imports would negatively impact market stability, local sales, and pricing structures for smallholder and commercial farmers.

The import ban will remain in place until local demand surpasses local supply.

NAMBORD has not indicated a specific timeline for review but states that market conditions will be closely monitored. The restriction will be lifted only once it is determined that domestic supply can no longer meet market needs.

This move is part of NAMBORD’s agricultural protection strategy to prioritise local produce and support farmers by regulating market balance. By managing import flow, NAMBORD aims to:

Prevent market saturation
Support price stability for local producers
Encourage the sale and distribution of locally grown crops

Farmers and retailers are encouraged to coordinate with NAMBORD to assess current stock levels and plan accordingly for the duration of the restriction.

The import restriction affects a variety

of stakeholders, including:

- Importers of fresh produce
- Retailers and wholesalers who stock imported vegetables
- Border agencies involved in customs and agricultural inspection
- Food processing companies sourcing raw produce externally
- Informal cross-border traders involved in vegetable resale

NAMBORD encourages all affected parties to comply with the restriction to avoid confiscation of goods, fines, or further regulatory action.

Border control teams have been notified of the enforcement measures. Any consignment of tomatoes or beetroots attempting to enter the country post- August 11, will be denied entry, returned to the country of origin, or destroyed, depending on applicable procedures.

NAMBORD advises all traders to cease ordering or transporting affected vegetables into the country before the restriction deadline. With the ban in place, consumers and retailers are encouraged to source directly from local producers. NAMBORD has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the local farming community receives market access and support, especially in peak production seasons.

Agricultural extension officers and market advisors will be working with farmers to coordinate supply and manage storage and logistics for the distribution of tomatoes and beetroots. For more information, affected stakeholders and members of the public may contact the following officials:

Musa Simelane, Trade Analyst 7617 6648 and Cynthia Simelane, Sales and Market Manager 7802 2908. They will provide guidance on the restriction policy, address logistical concerns, and share updates regarding any future changes to the ban.

Tertiary students welcome recent allowance increment

The Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS) has welcomed the recent E310 allowance increment, which raises the students monthly stipend from E1 690 to E2 000, but views this increment as a temporary reprieve, failing to address the practical standards of living for students.

This is contained in a statement issued by the SNUS President Gabiey Ndukuya on behalf of the SNUS National Executive Committee.

According to Ndukuya, SNUS welcomes the recent E310 allowance increment, which raises the monthly stipend from E1 690 to E2 000, but expresses deep disappointment and disillusionment. Ndukuya alleged that this increment seems to undermine the student movement’s demands and ignores the rising inflation rate in the country.

“SNUS views this increment as a temporary reprieve, failing to address the practical standards of living for students. The organisation notes that the increment does little to alleviate the hardships faced by students, including the increasing cost of living and academic expenses,” she alleged.

She pointed out that the decline in socio-economic conditions, marked by a severe drop in allowances of up to 60 per cent in 2011, has had a lasting impact on the education system.

This, she said, has led to students dropping out and, in extreme cases, committing suicide. “Furthermore, the 2019 increment was undermined by a 50 per cent decrease in the book allowance,” she said.

She mentioned that tragically, since 2019, over 24 students have taken their own lives due to unbearable hardships, and many more have succumbed to illness due to their inability to afford basic necessities.

“SNUS emphasises that education is a fundamental right, akin to elderly and not



▲ The entrance to the University of Eswatini.

a privilege. The organisation encourages students to unite and fight relentlessly for a substantial allowance increment, scholarships, and job opportunities. Students should demand their rights as taxpayers, rather than seeking education as a favour,” she said. Ndukuya mentioned that SNUS was calling for unity among students in the fight for just demands, rejecting the government’s alleged attempt to downplay their concerns. “Together, students can triumphantly fight for dignity and a better future,” she said. Meanwhile, this comes shortly after the Minister of Labour and Social Security Phila Buthelezi announced that the Government of Eswatini has increased allowances for students studying in local tertiary institutions by E310.

The increment will be effective from the end of August, marking the start of the 2025/2026 academic year.

This increment means that students allowances will rise from E1 690 to E2 000 per month. Per year, this translates to an increase from E16 900 to E20 000 per student, given that a year is 10 months in local tertiary institutions.

Security guards arrested for theft at Highlands Inn Hotel

Stories by Delisa Thwala

TWO security guards have been arrested for allegedly stealing over E48 000 worth of cash and food from the Highlands Inn Hotel in Pigg's Peak, which is owned by Member of Parliament Jabulani Mabuza.

The two accused are Thembinkosi Langa, 45, of Ngculwini, and Dumezweni Dlamini, 20, of Nkomazi. Both men were employed by the hotel as night security officers and are now facing charges of housebreaking with intent to steal and theft.

The case was heard by Magistrate Nkosingiphile Maseko. It is alleged that the two guards repeatedly accessed the hotel's safe and fridges during night shifts between May and July. CCTV footage reportedly captured them unlocking doors and taking keys to the safe.

The hotel manager reportedly first noticed discrepancies in May, when E1 800 went missing. She covered the missing amount from her own pocket. However, more money continued to vanish in the following weeks. Staff members, including cashiers and waiters, were questioned, but none could explain the missing funds.

Management reviewed CCTV footage



▲ Highlands Inn Hotel in Pigg's Peak.

and linked the suspects to the theft. Langa is further alleged to have sold the stolen food items to residents in Mlungundlovu, claiming the items came from a stokvel. He allegedly transported the food using public transport and charged up to E700 per package.

Statements

The matter was reported to the Pigg's Peak Police Station. Both men were brought in for questioning and provided written

statements. During their court appearance, both Langa and Dlamini chose to represent themselves and told the court they would plead guilty.

The Crown invoked Section 102 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, requesting that bail be set at half the value of the stolen items. The court agreed, setting bail at E24 000 each. Both accused were remanded in custody until August 13 pending trial.

Mabuza fined E6 000 for unsolicited kiss

A 32-year-old man has been fined E6 000 for kissing a woman on the cheek without her consent under false pretenses.

Nkosikhona Collen Mabuza of Lundzi was convicted at the Manzini Magistrate's Court for sexually assaulting Nompumelelo Macwele.

The offence took place on a Tuesday at KaLuhleko and was prosecuted under the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence

(SODV) Act.

According to court testimony, Macwele was looking for a job when Mabuza contacted her, claiming he had found work for her. She traveled to Bhunya, where he took her to his shack, saying his sister who had the job information would arrive later that evening.

Macwele said Mabuza invited her to sit on his bed and covered her with a blanket due to the cold. While doing so, he allegedly leaned over and kissed her cheek and then

attempted to kiss her on the mouth. She pushed him away and asked him to stop.

Mabuza later offered her food, which she declined. He then left the shack and locked her inside. Fearing for her safety, Macwele used her phone to contact her brother, who in turn contacted the police. Officers asked her to send her live location via WhatsApp.

When Mabuza returned, he claimed he was looking for a place for her to sleep, but the police arrived and arrested him. In court, Mabuza did not dispute Macwele's version of events.

In mitigation, he pleaded for leniency, citing unemployment and parental responsibilities. However, Principal Magistrate Florence Msibi sentenced him to three years in prison, with an option to pay a E6 000 fine. If the fine is not paid, Mabuza will serve the full sentence.



▲ Pigg's Peak Magistrate's Court entrance.

Man claims 'Kuhlanya' after assaulting girlfriend

A 32-year-old man has told the court he was mentally unwell when he assaulted the mother of his child and tried to stab another man during an altercation.

Andile Motsa of Msumpe appeared at the Pigg's Peak Magistrate's Court and was found guilty on two counts, assaulting Bongiwe Habile by strangling her and slamming her against a wall, and attempting to stab Mayibongwe Ngonyolo Ndlovu.

The incidents occurred on July 14 in Tincatsaveneni. Initially, Motsa pleaded guilty to the first charge and not guilty to the second. However, he later changed his plea to guilty on both counts.

In mitigation, Motsa told the court he acted out of anger and believed he was experiencing a mental health episode at the time of the assaults. He asked for leniency, saying he was unemployed and the sole provider for his minor child.

Sentencing

Before sentencing, Magistrate Maseko reminded Motsa that the court had repeatedly warned against violence towards loved ones. He said many people ignore these warnings and continue to abuse others.

The magistrate stressed the importance of protecting innocent members of society and said that harsher sentences were necessary to deter similar behaviour.

On the first count, Motsa was sentenced to two years in prison with the option of paying a E2 000 fine. On the second count, he was given a one-year sentence or a E1 000 fine. If he fails to pay, he will serve a total of three years in prison.

Two years for escaping court

A 34-year-old man who escaped police custody at the Manzini Magistrate's Court has been sentenced to two years in prison without the option of a fine.

Andile Sathane Mavimbela of Madonsa was found guilty of unlawfully escaping from custody after appearing in court on July 7 on charges of robbery and theft.

According to the charge sheet, Mavimbela escaped while at the court premises, contravening the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act.

Mavimbela had faced two criminal charges. On May 8, he allegedly used a knife to rob Ronald Magagula of a Redmi cellphone worth E2 000 and E250 in cash.

On July 1, he allegedly stole an ITEL cellphone valued at E300 from Sibusiso Ndlangamandla at KaKhoza. After being remanded on July 7, Mavimbela failed to return to court the following day,

prompting the court to issue a contempt charge against him.

He disappeared for ten days, and his whereabouts remained unknown. Detective Constable Shongwe testified that Mavimbela vanished when the officer briefly left the courtroom to consult with a prosecutor.

Despite extensive efforts by police including alerts to nearby stations he was not found until July 17 when Matsapha police located and arrested him.

In court, Mavimbela declined to cross-examine the officer. The prosecutor argued that his silence indicated guilt and asked for a conviction. The court agreed, noting the police used significant resources in their search.

Mavimbela admitted he was tempted to flee due to the absence of the investigating officer. He was convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment without a fine option.

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BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Second round of FMD vaccinations underway in Shiselweni region

THE Ministry of Agriculture has commenced the second round of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccinations across the Shiselweni region. The vaccination campaign targets cattle that received the initial dose during the first phase earlier this year. This week, at least 21 dip tanks have been scheduled to administer the second dose. The activity started last week with vaccinations at 14 dip tanks.

NAMBORD implements import ban on tomatoes and beetroots

THE National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAM-BORD) has announced a full restriction on the importation of tomatoes and beetroots. The border restriction will come into effect on Monday, 11 August 2025. The commodities affected by this restriction are, Tomatoes and Beetroots. These vegetables will not be permitted entry into the country through any official port of entry or informal border crossing from the effective date until further notice.

SA's private sector grows in July but cost pressures rise

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's private sector expanded slightly in July marking the third consecutive month of growth helped by renewed sales growth and sustained employment increases, a survey showed on Tuesday. The S&P Global South Africa Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 50.3 in July from 50.1 in June, S&P Global reported.

Eswatini pushes for trade reform to empower landlocked economies

By Delisa Magagula

AT a high-level side event focused on the integration of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) into the multilateral trading system, the Kingdom of Eswatini issued a direct and data-backed call for urgent reforms aimed at removing long-standing trade barriers that hinder the global competitiveness of LLDCs.

Representing Eswatini, the delegation spotlighted the systemic, geographical, and infrastructure-related challenges that continue to marginalise LLDCs from international markets.

"In 2024, LLDCs accounted for only 1.2% of global trade, despite making up 7% of the global population," said Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo.

Eswatini, like many landlocked economies, is entirely dependent on transit through neighbouring countries South Africa and Mozambique for access to seaports.

This dependence raises the cost of trade, prolongs delivery times, and undermines the country's ability to benefit from global supply chains.

Worth mentioning is that the Kingdom's trade challenges are compounded by:

1. Underdeveloped intermodal transport systems
2. Limited internet infrastructure and digital exclusion
3. Slow integration into services and digital trade markets
4. Weak regional cooperation and fragmented border procedures

"Any policy change or inefficiency in transit countries directly affects Eswatini's trade flows. It's not just a trade issue it's a developmental bottleneck," said the Minister.

In response, Eswatini is rolling out a suite of domestic reforms aimed at tackling these bottlenecks head-on.

Border Infrastructure and Corridor Investment, where Eswatini is seeking capital investment to modernise key border posts at Ngwenya, Mananga, and Lavumisa, improving connections to the Maputo and Durban corridors. These projects aim to reduce border delays and enhance logistics performance.

"To align with the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), Eswatini is developing a National Single Window system to digitise customs and trade procedures. The project is in progress, but its success hinges on technical assistance and cross-border coordination," explained the Khumalo.

With current exports dominated by sugar, textiles, and beverages, Eswatini is investing in agro-processing, green economy products, and high-value exports to boost resilience and move up value chains.

Meanwhile a standout reform is the Business One Stop Shop (BOSS), launched in 2025. This new platform consolidates multiple regulatory



▲ The Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba during the side meeting.

function business registration, licensing, tax, trade permits, and investment services into a single, digitised access point.

"BOSS will significantly reduce time and cost of doing business. It's a critical piece of the wider trade and investment puzzle," said Khumalo.

The initiative also supports broader goals of improving ease of doing business, enhancing investor confidence, and making trade more transparent and efficient, particularly for SMEs.

While domestic reforms are progressing, Eswatini emphasised that multilateral solutions are essential for durable impact. The Kingdom proposed a three-pillar roadmap for deeper LLDC engagement in global trade governance.

The Minister informed everyone that Eswatini supports the formal recognition of LLDCs as a special category within the WTO, with tailored provisions for transit, digital trade, and services market access.

"The country called for deeper cooperation with global institutions WTO, ITC, UNCTAD, Afreximbank, World Bank as well as regional blocs like SADC, SACU, and COMESA, to channel technical and financial support directly to LLDC-led programmes," he said.

He further said, the Kingdom urged stronger investments in trade data, research, and policy analysis to inform negotiation positions and measure progress under frameworks like the Awaza Programme of Action and Agenda 2030.

"No country should be left behind because of geography. Our reforms at home are building blocks but international support and system-level change remain critical." The Minister concluded.

With global momentum around trade inclusivity growing, Eswatini's case may serve as a model for how LLDCs can leverage national action and global partnerships to break through the barriers of landlocked development.

FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.6394	18.1040
G.B. Pound	23.4116	24.0846
EURO	20.3711	20.9782
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	

Second round of FMD vaccinations underway in Shiselweni region

By Delisa Magagula

THE Ministry of Agriculture has commenced the second round of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccinations across the Shiselweni region. The vaccination campaign targets cattle that received the initial dose during the first phase earlier this year.

This week, at least 21 dip tanks have been scheduled to administer the second dose. The activity started last week with vaccinations at 14 dip tanks.

Among the dip tanks included in the current round are Lotwete, Mdumela, Goodwill, Lubivane, Mesutha, Sitilo, Nyaningo, Sevule, and Tibane, with others continuing to be added to the rollout list.

Vaccinations at all participating dip tanks begin at 06:00 a.m., and farmers are instructed to bring their cattle early for timely inoculation.

During the initial phase, a total of 45,761 cattle were vaccinated across 65 dip tanks in Shiselweni.

The same number of cattle are now expected to receive the second dose, which completes the immunisation process and provides the necessary protection against FMD.

The second dose is a mandatory follow-up to ensure full immunity. According to Dr. Xolani Dlamini, Director of Veterinary



▲Dr. Xolani Dlamini, Director of Veterinary Services at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Services at the Ministry of Agriculture, the two-dose system is designed to maximise disease resistance among livestock.

“The first dose primes the immune system, but it’s the second one that completes the protection. It is vital that farmers ensure that their cattle receive both doses to guarantee maximum resistance,” he stated.

This vaccination programme is part of ongoing national efforts to control the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease, a highly contagious viral infection that affects cloven-hoofed animals.

In parallel with the local vaccination campaign, the Directorate of Veterinary and Livestock Services (DVLS) has also expanded regional coordination to reinforce border controls and minimise the risk of

cross-border infections.

Recently, three senior veterinary officers were dispatched to Jozini in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, to engage with their counterparts on collaborative disease control efforts.

This cross-border visit focused on enhancing control measures along the Eswatini–South Africa border, where livestock movement remains a risk factor for re-infection.

Dr. Dlamini emphasised the need for continuous engagement with South African officials to align with international FMD control standards. He also noted that the cordon fence plays a crucial role in preventing unauthorised movement of livestock and should be prioritised in the national control strategy.

“Priority should be given to procuring fencing materials for the reconstruction of the frontier line,” said Dr. Dlamini.

Reconstruction of damaged fence sections is currently underway in parts of the Shiselweni region as part of efforts to secure national livestock infrastructure.

Dr. Dlamini also acknowledged the cooperation received from the public at veterinary checkpoints, which continue to play a significant role in enforcing FMD protocols and controlling the movement of animals.

The Ministry of Agriculture urges all farmers in the affected and surrounding areas to bring their livestock for the second vaccination to ensure full compliance and protection.

By Delisa Magagula

THE National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBORD) has announced a full restriction on the importation of tomatoes and beetroots. The border restriction will come into effect on Monday, 11 August 2025.

The commodities affected by this restriction are, Tomatoes and Beetroots.

These vegetables will not be permitted entry into the country through any official port of entry or informal border crossing from the effective date until further notice.

According to NAMBORD, the restriction is a result of an excess supply of both tomatoes and beetroots in the local market.

The domestic agricultural sector has produced quantities that exceed current demand, and continued imports would negatively impact market stability, local sales, and pricing structures for smallholder and commercial farmers.

The import ban will remain in place until local demand surpasses local supply.

NAMBORD has not indicated a specific timeline for review but states that market conditions will be closely monitored. The restriction will be lifted only once it is determined that domestic supply can no longer meet market needs.

This move is part of NAMBORD’s agricultural protection strategy to prioritise local produce and support farmers by regulating market balance. By managing import flow, NAMBORD aims to:

1. Prevent market saturation

NAMBORD implements import ban on tomatoes and beetroots

2. Support price stability for local producers
 3. Encourage the sale and distribution of locally grown crops
- Farmers and retailers are encouraged to coordinate with NAMBORD to assess current stock levels and plan accordingly for the duration of the restriction.
- The import restriction affects a variety of stakeholders, including:
1. Importers of fresh produce
 2. Retailers and wholesalers who stock imported vegetables
 3. Border agencies involved in customs and agricultural inspection
 4. Food processing companies sourcing raw produce externally
 5. Informal cross-border traders involved in vegetable resale
- NAMBORD encourages all affected parties to comply with the restriction to avoid confiscation of goods, fines, or further regulatory action.
- Border control teams have been notified of the enforcement measures. Any consignment of tomatoes or beetroots attempting to enter the country post- August 11, will be denied entry, returned to the country of origin, or destroyed, depending on applicable procedures.
- NAMBORD advises all traders to cease ordering or transporting affected vegetables into the country before the restriction deadline.



▲Tomatoes and beetroots.

With the ban in place, consumers and retailers are encouraged to source directly from local producers. NAMBORD has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the local farming community receives market access and support, especially in peak production seasons.

Agricultural extension officers and market advisors will be working with farmers to coordinate supply and manage storage and logistics for the distribution of tomatoes and

beetroots.

For more information, affected stakeholders and members of the public may contact the following officials:

Musa Simelane, Trade Analyst 7617 6648 and Cynthia Simelane, Sales and Market Manager 7802 2908

They will provide guidance on the restriction policy, address logistical concerns, and share updates regarding any future changes to the ban.

SA's private sector grows in July but cost pressures rise, PMI shows

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's private sector expanded slightly in July marking the third consecutive month of growth helped by renewed sales growth and sustained employment increases, a survey showed on Tuesday.

The S&P Global South Africa Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 50.3 in July from 50.1 in June, S&P Global reported. Readings above 50 indicate growth in business activity, while below that signals contraction.

New orders and employment were the primary contributors to the headline figure, as new business volumes increased following a dip in June.

Domestic sales improved, particularly in services and wholesale & retail sectors, while new export business continued to decline for the fourth consecutive month.

Employment growth continued for the second month in a row.

The rate of expansion was the fastest since May 2024, supported by both permanent and temporary hires. This hiring helped reduce backlogs, with the quickest decrease in outstanding business since February.

However, cost pressures intensified, with input prices rising sharply, driven by a significant increase in staff costs. Wage inflation accelerated for the third consecutive month, and purchase costs rose due to higher fuel prices and supplier charges.

Despite these pressures, firms passed on some cost burdens to clients, resulting in a modest rise in output prices.

The outlook for future business activity improved to a six-month high, with 41 per cent of firms projecting increased output over the next 12 months.

However, optimism remained below the trend seen last year, as concerns about global trade policy and exchange rate movements persisted.

South Africa faces a 30 per cent tariff on its exports to the U.S. from this week, a move expected to cost tens of thousands of jobs, after the country failed to secure a trade deal before a deadline set by U.S. President Donald Trump.

The country said on Friday it would draft measures to support exporters hit by tariffs.

Rand slips before PMI survey

The South African rand weakened in early



▲ A two rand coin seen on top of the South African flag in this illustration.

trade on Tuesday ahead of the release of a purchasing managers' index (PMI) survey.

At 0700 GMT the rand traded at 17.97 against the dollar, about 0.3 per cent weaker than its previous close.

Last week a gauge of local manufacturing sentiment showed an improvement in July, pointing to better business conditions in the sector for the first time in nine months.

"For now, the rand is holding its own against the USD and has taken advantage of the USD's slide, which followed the weaker-than-expected non-farm payrolls data on Friday," said ETM Analytics in a research note. South Africa's benchmark 2035 government bond was slightly stronger in early deals, as the yield shed one basis point to 9.62 per cent. (Reuters)



▲ A woman uses a trolley as she shops at a Pick n Pay store at Maponya mall in Soweto, South Africa.

Pick n Pay turnover lifted by Boxer, on course for break even

By Sfundo Parakozov

JOHANNESBURG — South African grocery group Pick n Pay on Tuesday reported a 4.3 per cent increase in group turnover, buoyed mainly by strong growth in its discounter business Boxer which it spun out and listed last year.

Like-for-like sales, which exclude the impact of store openings, closures, conversions, or acquisitions, rose 3.8 per cent during the period, the group said in a trading statement for the 17 weeks ended June 29.

Boxer, majority-owned by Pick n Pay, was listed separately on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in November 2024 and competes with Shoprite's Usave and SPAR's SaveMor in smaller towns, townships, and rural areas.

The discounter reported a 12.1 per cent increase in turnover, with like-for-like sales rising 3.9 per cent.

"The Group views this as a creditable performance in the context of a highly

constrained consumer and continued subdued food price inflation," Pick n Pay said.

Its subsidiary Pick n Pay South Africa recorded 3.6 per cent growth in like-for-like sales, despite planned store closures and conversions under its Store Estate Reset Plan. It said it was making progress with its store reset and business restructuring plans, which are aimed at helping its core supermarket business break even in the medium term.

At its annual results presentation in May the group said a trading loss in the Pick n Pay business narrowed by 1 billion rand to 549 million rand and that it anticipated the business to break even by 2028.

On Tuesday, the company's shares were 3 per cent higher at 1314 GMT.

Pick n Pay, the second-largest grocery retailer in southern Africa by turnover, also announced the appointment of Grant Pattison as an independent non-executive director designate. Pattison, a former CEO of Edcon and Massmart Holdings, will join the board in 2026 after completing his current commitments. (Reuters)

Gold steadies as firm dollar offsets rate cut bets



▲ A woman holds a gold ornament at a jewellery shop in the old quarters of Delhi, India.

By Sarah Qureshi

GOLD prices held steady on Tuesday as a firmer dollar countered support from U.S. rate cut bets, while market participants awaited President Trump's announcement on new Federal Reserve appointments.

Spot gold was up 0.1 per cent at \$3,376.80 per ounce, by 0947 a.m. ET (1347 GMT) after rising to its highest level since July 24 on Monday. U.S. gold futures also rose 0.1 per cent at \$3,430.

The dollar was up 0.2 per cent, making greenback-priced gold more expensive for overseas buyers.

A stronger dollar is pressuring gold right now, but expectations that the Fed will start cutting rates in September remain very supportive for gold, said Bob Haberkorn, senior market strategist at RJO Futures.

Markets are currently pricing in two rate cuts by year-end, beginning in September after Friday's unexpectedly weak June hiring data.

Gold is used as a safe store of value during political and financial uncertainty, and thrives in a low-interest-rate environment

as it yields no interest.

Meanwhile, Trump said he would announce decisions soon on a short-term replacement for Federal Reserve Governor Adriana Kugler, who announced her resignation on Friday, as well as his pick for the next Fed chair.

Data showed that the U.S. trade deficit narrowed in June on a sharp drop in consumer goods imports, the latest evidence of the imprint on global commerce Trump is making with sweeping tariffs on imported goods.

Investors now await Thursday's U.S. jobs data for more clues into the Fed's potential rate path.

Spot silver rose 0.4 per cent to \$37.53 per ounce, reaching its highest level since July 30.

"I'm more bullish on silver than gold right now. I think silver could break above \$40, and if it does, the next target would likely be around \$42," Haberkorn said.

Platinum lost 1.3 per cent to \$1,312.42 and palladium shed 1.7 per cent to \$1,186.18.

South Africa-based miner Sibanye-Stillwater has asked the United States to consider imposing a tariff on Russian palladium imports to support the long-term viability of U.S. supplies. (Reuters)

Autopilot verdict deals Tesla a ‘black eye’, threatens Musk’s robotaxi ambitions

A court verdict against Tesla (TSLA.O), opens new tab last week, stemming from a fatal 2019 crash of an Autopilot-equipped Model S, could hurt its plans to expand its nascent robotaxi network and intensify concerns over the safety of its autonomous vehicle technology. A Florida jury ordered Musk’s electric vehicle company on Friday to pay about \$243 million to victims of the crash, finding its Autopilot driver-assistance software defective. Tesla said the driver was solely at fault and vowed to appeal.

The verdict follows years of federal investigations and recalls related to collisions involving Tesla’s autonomous-vehicle technology, and comes as CEO Elon Musk seeks regulatory approval to rapidly expand the robotaxi service across the U.S.

“The public perception of this verdict or things like this are going to fuel pressure on regulators to say, ‘We just can’t let this stuff be launched without a lot more due diligence,’” said Mike Nelson, founder of Nelson Law and an expert on legal issues in the mobility sector.

Tesla could have a tough time convincing state regulators that its technology is road-ready, threatening Musk’s goal of offering robotaxis to half the U.S. population by year end, legal experts and Tesla investors said.

Expanding its robotaxi service is crucial for Tesla as demand for its aging lineup of EVs has cooled amid rising global competition and a backlash against Musk’s far right political views. Much of Tesla’s trillion-dollar market valuation hinges on his bets on robotics and artificial intelligence.

Success in the self-driving realm will require winning the confidence of regulators and potential customers on the full-self driving (FSD) software that underpins Tesla’s robotaxis, analysts said.

“The timing (of the verdict) for Tesla in

light of the FSD rollouts and robotaxis is awful,” said Aaron Davis, co-managing partner at law firm Davis Goldman. “Now there’s essentially an opinion that some aspect of Tesla’s business is not safe and maybe the safety that the company advertises isn’t what it’s cracked up to be.”

The FSD is an advanced version of Autopilot.

Autopilot, which has been updated since 2019, controls speed, distance and lane centering on highways, while the FSD can operate on city streets, helping the vehicle make automatic turns and change lanes.

“This case does not have direct implications for Tesla’s FSD roll-out,” analysts at Piper Sandler said in a note on Sunday, citing the modern iterations of the software.

A spokesperson on behalf of Tesla acknowledged the company had received a request for comment from Reuters but had not provided one by the time of publication.

Perfecting autonomous vehicles has been harder than expected. The high costs of hardware, years of trial and error, and regulatory hurdles have forced many players to close shop or pivot, including General Motors’ (GM.N), opens new tab Cruise unit.

Musk, however, has pursued what he calls a simpler and cheaper path, relying only on cameras and AI instead of pricey sensors such as lidars and radars used by Alphabet’s (GOOGL.O), opens new tab Waymo, Amazon’s (AMZN.O), opens new tab Zoox and others.

After years of missed deadlines, Musk rolled out a small robotaxi trial in June with about a dozen Model Y crossover SUVs in Austin, Texas, each overseen by a human safety monitor in the front passenger seat.

While Musk has said Tesla was being “super paranoid about safety”, he has also pledged to expand the service fast and make it available for half of the U.S. population



▲ A Tesla robotaxi drives on the street along South Congress Avenue in Austin, Texas, U.S. in the next five months - a stark contrast to Waymo’s cautious years-long rollout.

Until Tesla’s entry, Waymo was the only U.S. firm to operate a paid, driverless robotaxi service.

Tesla is currently awaiting approvals in several states, including California, Nevada, Arizona and Florida.

California’s department of motor vehicles declined to comment on the impact of the verdict on regulatory approval.

Nevada said it held talks with Tesla about a robotaxi program several weeks ago, while Arizona said it was still considering Tesla’s request for certification. Both did not comment on the verdict.

Florida did not respond.

Tesla has typically either won other Auto-

pilot litigation or resolved the case with the plaintiffs out of court. The Florida verdict stands out. Several such cases are pending.

The case involved a Model S sedan that went through an intersection and hit the victims’ parked Chevrolet Tahoe as they were standing beside it. The driver had reached down to retrieve a dropped cellphone and allegedly received no alerts as he ran a stop sign before the crash.

The jury found that Tesla’s Autopilot had a defect and held the company partially responsible, despite the driver admitting fault.

“It’s going to take time to get regulators to move forward and time being more than the end of the year,” said Gene Munster, managing partner at Deepwater Asset Management, a Tesla investor.(Reuters)

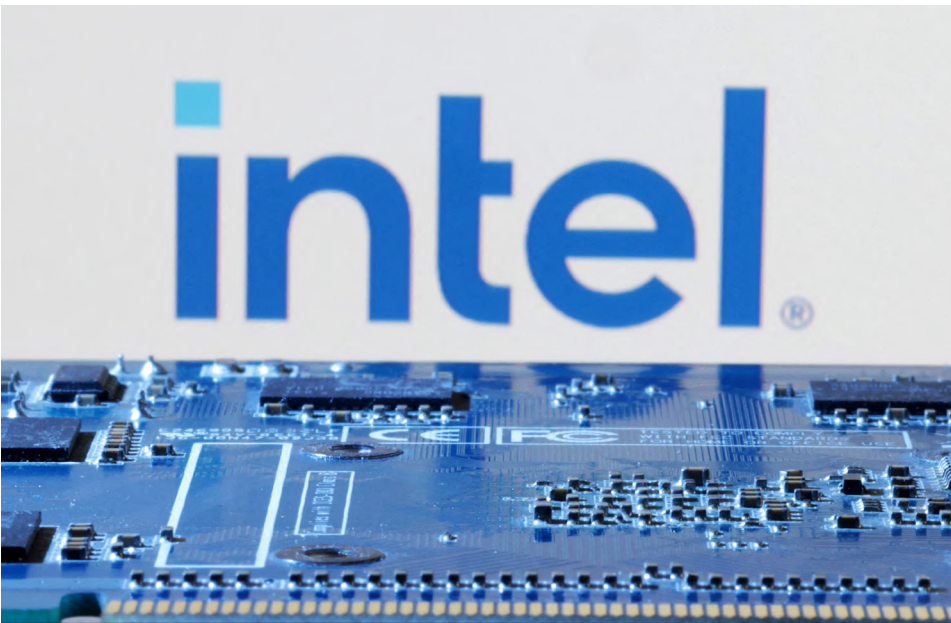
Intel struggles with key manufacturing process for next PC chip

THE production process that Intel, opens new tab hoped would pave the way to winning manufacturing deals and restore its edge in churning out high-end, high-margin chips is facing a big hurdle on quality as it puts newer technologies to the test, two people briefed on the matter told Reuters.

For months, Intel has promised investors it would increase manufacturing using a process it calls 18A. It spent billions of dollars developing 18A, including the construction or upgrades of several factories, with the goal of challenging Taiwan’s chipmaking heavyweight, TSMC, opens new tab.

Intel wants to round out its business designing chips that it largely makes in-house and TSMC helps it produce, with a contract manufacturing business that can compete with this key supplier. But whether Intel revives advanced chip production in the U.S. and gets its contract foundry on solid footing depends on closing the technology gap with TSMC.

Early tests disappointed customers last year, but Intel has said its 18A is on track to make its “Panther Lake” laptop semiconductors at high volume starting in 2025, which include next-generation transistors and a more efficient way to deliver power to the chip. The chipmaker has hoped that producing such an advanced in-house chip would grow external interest in its foundry, at a time when new CEO Lip-Bu Tan has explored a major shift to course-correct that fledgling business, Reuters previously re-



▲ Intel logo is seen near computer motherboard in this illustration.

ported.

Yet only a small percentage of the Panther Lake chips printed via 18A have been good enough to make available to customers, said the two people, who were briefed on the company’s test data since late last year. The sources spoke on condition of anonymity because Intel did not authorize them to disclose such information.

This percentage figure, known as yield, means Intel may struggle to make its high-end laptop chip profitably in the near future.

Yield may inch up or down as a foundry optimizes its manufacturing process. Com-

panies also calculate yield in a variety of ways, which can make this critical data a moving goal post, the two people and two additional sources with knowledge of Intel’s manufacturing operation said.

Yields generally “start off low and improve over time,” Intel’s Chief Financial Officer David Zinsner told Reuters in a July 24 interview.

For Panther Lake, “it’s early in the ramp,” he said. In a statement on July 30, Intel added: “Our performance and yield trajectory gives us confidence this will be a successful launch that further strengthens Intel’s posi-

tion in the notebook market.”

Intel in the past has aimed for a yield north of 50% before ramping production because starting any earlier risked damaging its profit margin, three of the sources said.

Intel typically does not make the lion’s share of its profit until yields reach roughly 70% to 80%, key for a chip as small as Panther Lake where many defects would make it a tough sell, the three people said. Profit also flows from market expansions and building up factory output, Intel said.

An immense yield increase would be a tall task by Panther Lake’s fourth-quarter launch, the two people with knowledge of Intel’s manufacturing operation said. But without such a jump, Intel may have to sell some chips at a lower profit margin or at a loss, the two sources briefed on test data said.

Panther Lake is “fully on track,” Intel said in its July 30 comment. Intel did not specify the yield threshold at which its chips become profitable.

The company has warned it could exit leading-edge manufacturing entirely if it does not land external business for 14A, which is 18A’s next-generation successor.

‘HAIL MARY’

Intel’s 18A process involved big manufacturing changes and introduced newer technologies all at once, such as a next-generation transistor design and a feature that would improve the delivery of energy to a chip.

(Reuters)

FUNDING cuts are driving an entire generation of children in Sudan to the brink of irreversible harm as support is scaled back and malnutrition cases persist across the country, the U.N. children's agency said on Tuesday.

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.

"Children have limited access to safe water, food, healthcare. Malnutrition is rife, and many good children are reduced to just skin, bones," said Sheldon Yett, UNICEF's Representative in Sudan, speaking via video link from Port Sudan.

Sudan's conflict between the army and rival Rapid Support Forces has displaced millions and split the country into rival zones of control with the RSF still deeply embedded in western Sudan.

Several areas to the south of Sudan's capital Khartoum are at risk of famine, the World Food Programme said in July.

Children were being cut off from life-saving services due to funding cuts, while the scale of need is staggering, UNICEF said.

"With recent funding cuts, many of our partners in Khartoum and elsewhere have been forced to scale back... We are being stretched to the limit across Sudan, with children dying of hunger," Yett said.

"We on the verge of irreversible damage being done to an entire generation of children in Sudan."

Only 23% of the 4.16 billion dollar global



Funding cuts drive Sudan's children to the brink of irreversible harm

humanitarian response plan for Sudan has been funded, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Access to areas in need also continues to be a challenge, with some roads rendered inaccessible due to the rainy season, hamper-

ing aid delivery efforts, UNICEF said. Other areas continue to be under siege, such as Al-Fashir.

"It has been one year since famine was confirmed in ZamZam camp and no food has reached this area. Al-Fashir remains under siege. We need that access now," said Jens

Laerke of OCHA.

(This story has been corrected to say that the global humanitarian response plan for Sudan is 4.16 billion dollars, not 4.6 billion dollars, after the UN corrected the figure, in paragraph 9)

(Reuters)



▲ Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi (R) and his visiting Vietnamese counterpart Luong Cuong shake hands ahead of their talks in Cairo.

Vietnam and Egypt elevate ties to comprehensive partnership

VIETNAMESE President Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi signed a joint statement formally elevating bilateral relations to a Comprehensive Partnership, ushering in a new era for cooperation after six decades of diplomatic ties.

Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepening political trust and implementing breakthrough measures across sectors including trade, investment, education, science and technology, green transition, digital transformation, defense, and cultural exchange.

They agreed to establish a working group to explore a potential Vietnam-Egypt Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and greenlight expanded cooperation in education, tourism, local development, fintech, and halal industries.

Vietnam will open its market to select Egyptian goods, while Egypt — positioned at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe — pledged to serve as a gateway for Vietnamese businesses across the Middle East and Africa. Meanwhile, Vietnam aims to act as a strategic partner to access ASEAN markets.

Bilateral trade reached US \$541.4 million in 2024, marking Vietnam's highest trade

volume in North Africa, with Vietnam holding a substantial trade surplus. Vietnam also holds correspondent banking ties with Egypt and has Vietnamese enterprises investing locally.

Vietnam's leadership anticipates this level up will enhance mutual support in forums like the UN, NAM, AU, and ASEAN, fostering regional stability and cooperation between Southeast Asia and the Middle East African region.

The two sides stressed the importance of establishing a working group to study the feasibility of negotiating a Vietnam-Egypt Free Trade Agreement, promote cooperation in education, people-to-people exchanges, enhance tourism promotion, and introduce each other's destinations, culture, and people.

President Cuong thanked Egypt for offering scholarships for Arabic language training to Vietnamese students and proposed expanding cooperation and student exchanges in new fields such as Halal industry, agriculture, international relations, as well as sharing experience and supporting Vietnam in preserving and promoting national cultural values, museum management, and sustainable tourism development.

(Africanews)

30,000 South African jobs at risk from US tariffs

SOUTH Africa's trade and industry minister on Monday said that the 30 per cent reciprocal tariffs imposed by the United States could put tens of thousands of jobs at risk.

"We've based this on the ongoing consultations that we have with all the sectors of the economy, from automotive, agriculture and all the other sectors that are going to be impacted," said Simphiwe Hamilton, Director-General of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition.

"At this stage we are sitting at approximately 30,000 jobs that could be affected by this, if it were to be mismanaged in any manner," he said.

Last Thursday, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order placing new tariff rates on dozens of countries, hours before the 1 August deadline he had set for deals to be made.

While some countries received modified tariff rates, South Africa's remained at the

30 per cent previously proposed, putting it in the top five highest levies imposed by Trump on any nation.

The US is South Africa's third-largest trading partner (7.5 per cent of total exports), with China second at 11 per cent and the European Union the largest at 17 per cent.

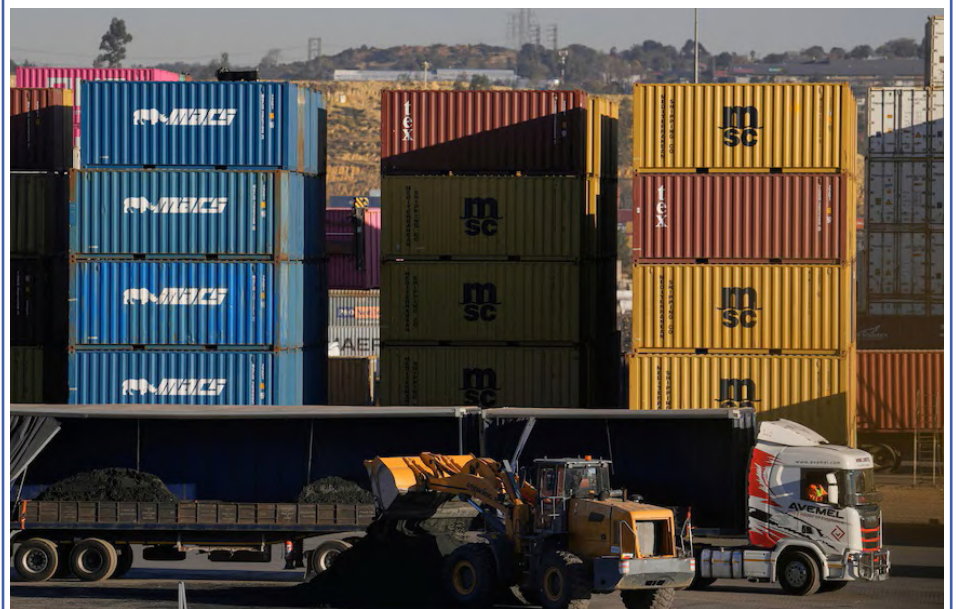
South Africa's agricultural and automotive industries are expected to be among the hardest hit.

The country is already grappling with stubbornly high unemployment rates. The official rate was 32.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2025 according to StatsSA, the national statistical agency.

Meanwhile, the South African government is in the process of drafting measures to support exporters hit by the new levy.

It said there will be a multilateral response to the tariffs, including ongoing diplomatic talks with Washington, outreach to other trading partners, and measures to support local businesses.

(Africanews)



RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin is unlikely to bow to a sanctions ultimatum expiring this Friday from U.S. President Donald Trump, and retains the goal of capturing four regions of Ukraine in their entirety, sources close to the Kremlin told Reuters.

Trump has threatened to hit Russia with new sanctions and impose 100% tariffs on countries that buy its oil - of which the biggest are China and India - unless Putin agrees to a ceasefire in Russia's war in Ukraine.

Putin's determination to keep going is prompted by his belief that Russia is winning and by scepticism that yet more U.S. sanctions will have much of an impact after successive waves of economic penalties during 3-1/2 years of war, according to three sources familiar with discussions in the Kremlin.

The Russian leader does not want to anger Trump, and he realises that he may be spurning a chance to improve relations with Washington and the West, but his war goals take precedence, two of the sources said.

Putin's goal is to fully capture the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, which Russia has claimed as its own, and then to talk about a peace agreement, one of the sources said.

"If Putin were able to fully occupy those four regions which he has claimed for Russia he could claim that his war in Ukraine had reached his objectives," said James Rodgers, author of the forthcoming book "The Return of Russia".

The current talks process, in which Russian and Ukrainian negotiators have met three times since May, was an attempt by Moscow to convince Trump that Putin was not rejecting peace, the first source said, adding that the talks were devoid of real substance apart from discussions on humanitarian exchanges.

Putin doubts potency of Trump's ultimatum to end the war



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin are seen during the G20 leaders summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Russia says it is serious about agreeing a long-term peace in the negotiations but that the process is complicated because the two sides' stances are so far apart. Putin last week described the talks as positive.

Moscow's stated demands include a full Ukrainian withdrawal from the four regions and acceptance by Kyiv of neutral status and limits on the size of its military - demands rejected by Ukraine.

In a sign that there may yet be an opportunity to strike a deal before the deadline, Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff is expected to visit Russia this week, following an escalation in rhetoric between Trump and Moscow over risks of nuclear war. On Monday, Russia said it was no longer bound by a moratorium on short- and medium-range nuclear missiles.

The Kremlin did not respond to a request for comment for this story. All the sources spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation.

Trump, who in the past has praised Putin and held out the prospect of lucrative business deals between their two countries, has lately expressed growing impatience with the Russian president. He has complained about what he called Putin's "bullshit" and described Russia's relentless bombing of Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities as "disgusting".

The Kremlin has said it noted Trump's statements but it has declined to respond to them.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko last week called on the world to respond with "maximum pressure" after the worst Russian air strike of the year killed 31 people in Kyiv, including five children, in what she called Russia's response to Trump's deadline.

"President Trump wants to stop the killing, which is why he is selling American-made weapons to NATO members and threatening Putin with biting tariffs and sanctions if he does not agree to a ceasefire," White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said in response to a request for comment.

FORCES ADVANCE

The first source said Putin was privately concerned about the recent deterioration of U.S. ties. Putin still retains the hope that Russia can again befriend America and trade with the West, and "he is worried" about Trump's irritation, this person said.

But with Moscow's forces advancing on the battlefield and Ukraine under heavy military pressure, Putin does not believe now is the time to end the war, the source said, adding that neither the Russian people nor the army would understand if he stops now.

Rodgers, the author, said Putin has invested his political reputation and legacy in the war in Ukraine.

"We know from his previous writings and statements that he sees himself as part of a strong tradition of standing up to the West and the rest of the world to defend Russia's interests," he said. (Reuters)

Israel considers full Gaza takeover as more die of hunger



▲ Palestinians climb onto trucks as they seek aid supplies in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip.

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu favours a complete military takeover of Gaza, media reported, and was to meet senior security officials on Tuesday to finalise a new strategy in the 22-month war.

Mediation between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas has collapsed despite intense international pressure for a ceasefire to ease hunger and appalling conditions in the besieged Palestinian enclave.

Eight more people died of starvation or malnutrition in the past 24 hours, Gaza's health ministry said, while another 79 died in the latest Israeli fire.

Netanyahu was to meet Defence Minister Israel Katz and military Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir to decide on a strategy to take to cabinet later this week, an Israeli official told

Reuters. Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, a confidant of Netanyahu, would also be present.

Israel's Channel 12, citing an official from Netanyahu's office, said the prime minister was leaning towards taking control of the entire territory. That would reverse a 2005 decision to pull settlers and military out of Gaza while retaining control over its borders, a move right-wing parties blame for Hamas gaining power there.

It was unclear, however, whether Netanyahu was foreseeing a prolonged occupation or a short-term operation aimed at dismantling Hamas and freeing Israeli hostages. The prime minister's office declined to comment on the Channel 12 report.

"It is still necessary to complete the defeat of the enemy in Gaza, release our hostages and ensure that Gaza never again consti-

tutes a threat to Israel," Netanyahu told new recruits at a military base. "We are not giving up on any of these missions."

On Saturday, Hamas released a video of Evyatar David, one of 50 hostages still held in Gaza, appearing emaciated in what seemed to be an underground tunnel. The images shocked Israelis and sparked international condemnation.

Throughout the war, there has been sustained international pressure on Hamas to release the remaining hostages, of whom Israeli officials estimate 20 are believed to still be alive. Most hostages have been released during ceasefires following diplomatic negotiations. Israel broke the last ceasefire.

PRESSURE TACTIC?

A Palestinian official said the threat of a full takeover of Gaza may be a tactic to pressure Hamas into concessions, while the Palestinian Foreign Ministry urged foreign nations to take heed of the reports.

"The ministry urges countries and the international community to treat these leaks with utmost seriousness and to intervene urgently to prevent their implementation, whether these leaks are meant to exert pressure, test international reactions, or are genuine and serious," it said.

Israel's coalition government, the most right-wing and religiously conservative in its history, includes far-right politicians who advocate for the annexation of both Gaza and the West Bank and encourage Palestinians to leave their homeland.

Nearly two years of fighting in Gaza has strained the military, which has a small standing army and has had to repeatedly mobilise reservists. It has throughout the war pushed back against the idea of Israel fully occupying Gaza.

In a sign of differences between some

members of Israel's ruling coalition and the military, far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir on X challenged military head Zamir to state he would comply with government directives even if a decision was made to take all of Gaza.

Foreign Minister Gideon Saar then said the military chief must give his professional opinion, while Defence Minister Katz weighed in to say the military would professionally implement whatever policy the government set.

HUNGER

The war was triggered when Hamas-led militants on October 7, 2023, attacked Israel, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and capturing 251 hostages, taking them into Gaza.

Israel's military response has devastated the tiny, crowded enclave, killing more than 61,000 people - mostly civilians - according to Palestinian health authorities.

Israel's campaign has forced nearly all of Gaza's over 2 million people from their homes and caused what a global hunger monitor called last week an unfolding famine.

Some 188 Palestinians, including 94 children, have died from hunger since the war began, according to Gaza authorities.

An Israeli security official, in a briefing to reporters, acknowledged there may be hunger in some parts of Gaza but rejected reports of famine or starvation.

On Tuesday, Israeli tanks pushed into central Gaza but it was not clear if the move was part of a larger ground offensive.

Palestinians living in the last quarter of territory where Israel has not yet taken military control - via ground incursions or orders for civilians to leave - said any new push would be catastrophic. (Reuters)

Ndosh slated for ECOFEST

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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ESWATINI international comedy star Ndosh has been announced as the second 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. The event has already confirmed comedian Baldwin Bals. From the Kingdom of Eswatini, Ndosh is a uniquely talented stand-up comedian who can set any comedy room ablaze. Ndosh has established himself as a standout headliner with many stage appearances.

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

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."

Impressive

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.



Christian Maz confirms details for SA One Man Show

MULTI-award-winning poet Christian Maz is set to host the third edition of his acclaimed One Man Show, titled "Something With Gold," in South Africa.

The event is scheduled for September 28, 2025, at Maboneng in Johannesburg, starting at 4 pm. This highly anticipated show is set to be a remarkable celebration of poetry, creativity, and cultural exchange. Christian Maz, known for his powerful performances and thought-provoking poems, confirmed the event in an exclusive interview with this publication.

"This marks the third edition of my One Man Poetry Show. I am thrilled to bring it to South Africa, a country rich in artistic talent and cultural diversity," he stated. The theme for this edition, "Words Have No Borders," reflects the universal nature of poetry and its ability to transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

The show will feature an exciting lineup, headlined by Christian Maz himself, alongside South African poet Sisanda, who is known for her captivating performances and poignant storytelling. The collaboration between these two talented poets is expected to create a dynamic and enriching experience for the audience, showcasing the

beauty of spoken word and the power of shared narratives.

Tickets for the event are now available through Computicket, E150 for general admission, for E250 for VIP. Christian Maz encouraged poetry lovers and supporters of the arts to secure their spots early. "This is a very massive one for the poetic space and the entertainment industry at large. We are so excited to announce this one. South Africa, be ready, and Eswatini, get your passports ready," he exclaimed.

Following the Johannesburg show, Christian Maz revealed plans for an extensive tour across all South African provinces, accompanied by Sisanda the Poet. This tour aims to reach a wider audience and promote the art of poetry throughout the region. "We want to connect with communities, share our stories, and inspire others through our craft. Poetry has the power to heal, unite, and provoke thought, and we want to spread that message far and wide," he explained.

Considering the ambitious plans for the tour, Christian Maz is actively seeking sponsorship from corporations and individuals who share a passion for the arts. He encourages potential sponsors to reach out to him via email at christianmaz30@gmail.com. "Support from the community



▲ Poet Christian Maz.

and businesses is crucial in making this vision a reality. Together, we can elevate the poetic space and create unforgettable experiences for audiences," he added.



▲ Mount Zion director Sphiwo Ndoni.

Mount Zion Experience tickets move to pre-sale

AFTER selling out the early bird tickets, the highly anticipated Mount Zion Experience has officially transitioned to presale.

This event is set to be a transformative evening filled with worship, music, and spiritual rejuvenation, set to take place on October 24, 2025, at the Metropolitan Evangelical Church. Presale tickets are priced at E150, while tickets purchased at the gate will cost E200. For those seeking more exclusive experience, VIP tickets are available for E400.

The Mount Zion Experience is not just a concert; it is a gathering designed to uplift and inspire believers from all walks of life, fostering a sense of unity and celebration of faith. The event's theme, 'All White, All Night,' reflects a commitment to purity and spiritual enlightenment, encouraging attendees to don white attire as a visual representation of their devotion. Sphiwo Ndoni, the event's director and a prominent figure in Eswatini's gospel music scene, confirmed the details of the event, expressing his excitement and dedication to creating an unforgettable experience for all participants.

Spiritual

"I am thrilled to announce the Mount Zion Experience," Sphiwo Ndoni shared. "It's not just an event; it's a spiritual journey that we will embark on together. I invite everyone to come and experience the power of worship in a vibrant and uplifting atmosphere." His heartfelt message resonates with many, as he took to social media to extend an invitation to his followers, urging them to prepare their hearts for a night of revival and spiritual connection. "My blessed family, may I humbly and kindly invite you to The Mount Zion Experience Eswatini 2025," he wrote.

The event will kick off at 7 pm and is expected to continue late into the night, transforming the Metropolitan Evangelical Church into a sanctuary of worship. Attendees can look forward to an evening filled with powerful music, heartfelt prayers, and a strong sense of community as they gather to celebrate their shared faith. The Mount Zion Experience is designed to be inclusive, welcoming believers from diverse backgrounds to come together in worship and fellowship.

As 4 Jerry P headlines first international gig alongside Pcee

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

AS 4 Jerry P, a talented musician from Eswatini, has made a significant leap in his career by securing his first international gig alongside well-known South African star Pcee.

This milestone marks an exciting chapter for the artist, who is set to headline the 1st Annual Spring Fest on September 27, 2025, at the Mabone Garden Pub & Grill. The announcement has generated considerable buzz among fans and the local music community, as As 4 Jerry P has become a prominent figure in the Eswatini music scene. Known for his unique sound that blends traditional Swazi elements with contemporary influences, the artist has garnered a loyal following, both locally and beyond.

In a recent interview, As 4 Jerry P expressed his enthusiasm and gratitude for the opportunity to perform on an international stage. "It's a dream come true to share my music with global audiences. I'm excited to connect with fans worldwide and showcase Swazi culture," he stated. His words reflect the aspirations of many artists from the region who seek to promote their heritage through music.

The significance of this international show extends beyond personal achievement; it represents a broader opportunity for the Eswatini music industry. As 4 Jerry P highlighted the importance of international performances for brand growth, he noted, "International shows are a huge opportunity for my brand to grow and reach new fans. It allows me to share my unique sound and perspective



▲ As 4 Jerry P.

with diverse audiences, promoting cultural exchange and understanding."

Talents

The 1st Annual Spring Fest is expected to attract a diverse crowd, providing a platform for various artists to showcase their talents. As 4 Jerry P's participation is particularly noteworthy, as he aims to

represent his culture and heritage on a global stage. "To emaSwati, I promise to proudly represent our culture, heritage, and values on the global stage. I'll strive to make you proud, sharing our story and music with the world, while staying true to my roots and community," he assured his fans.

Lizwe Umlangeni is selling his new album as CDs

ESWATINI poet Lizwe Umlangeni has officially released his new album, titled 'Lugcobo Lwenkondlo,' which is now available for purchase in CD format.

In an exclusive interview, Lizwe Umlangeni shared that the album delves into the importance of wisdom through poetry, emphasising the need to understand the roots and background of this expressive art form. "The album is infused with themes of love, reality, pain, culture, motivation, and encouragement," he explained, highlighting its broader message to listeners and the poetry community at large. The inspiration behind 'Lugcobo Lwenkondlo' stems from the poet's journey, particularly his encounter with Christ, which ignited his passion for poetry. "My love for poetry and the drive to see it grow in Eswatini the right way are at the heart of this project," he stated. This spiritual foundation informs the album's focus on spiritual knowledge, motivation, and the rich cultural heritage of Eswatini.

Lizwe Umlangeni also emphasised the collaborative nature of the album, which features esteemed poets and fellow musicians from the Kingdom. This collaboration not only enhances the album's depth but also serves to spread

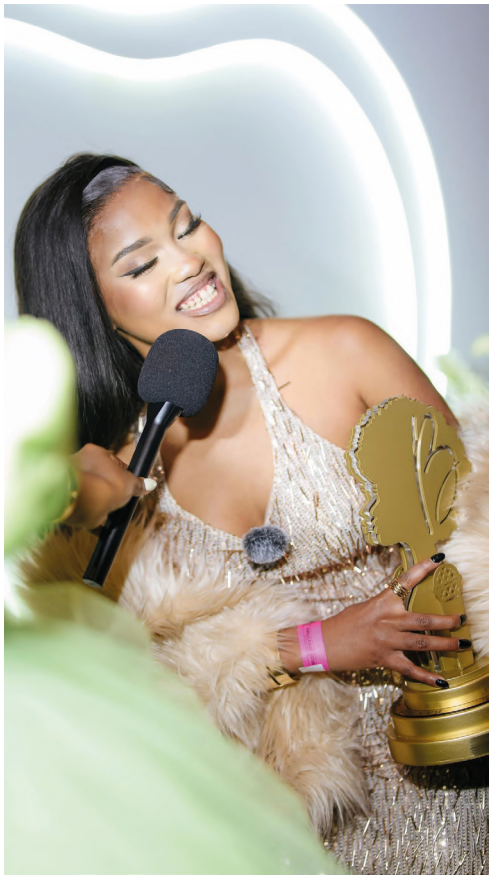


its message effectively. "The anointing of this work serves as a guide to those willing to hear and learn more," he remarked, reinforcing the album's intent to educate and inspire.

Discussing the creative process, the star described the journey as both challenging and exhilarating. "It had its ups and downs, but teamwork is what makes the dream work," he noted. The album boasts exciting collaborations with notable artists such as Apex de Vocalist, Siya Imbongi, M Age, Thandumusa, Queen Bee, Poet

Amandla, and Melihle EM. Behind the scenes, the album has been brought to life by a talented group of producers, including Tus Mvuleni, Tweester Lepopinyana, SaM V, and TML Studio.

In addition to physical CD sales, Umlangeni is excited to announce that 'Lugcobo Lwenkondlo' will also be available on all digital platforms. "Getting poetry lovers to stream it would be an honour and a pleasure," he expressed, recognising the importance of reaching a broader audience through digital means.



▲ Zee Nxumalo.

Basadi in Music Awards:

Zee Nxumalo crowned Artist of the Year

ESWATINI-born global music superstar Zee Nxumalo has taken the South African music scene by storm, being celebrated as the SofnFree Artist of the Year at the 2025 Basadi in Music Awards.

This prestigious recognition marks a significant milestone in her career and highlights her remarkable contributions to the music industry. The Basadi in Music Awards, launched in 2022, aim to honour and elevate female talent across the spectrum of music, from singers and rappers to DJs and producers. This year's awards focused on celebrating the achievements of women in an industry where they have often been overlooked. The term 'Basadi,' meaning women, encapsulates the essence of this celebration, emphasising the importance of visibility and support for female artists.

Awards

Zee Nxumalo stood out at the awards with four nominations, the highest of any artist. Notable nominees include Tyla, DJ Zinhle, Lwah Ndlunkulu, Kamo Mphela, and Cici, each receiving multiple nominations. Zee Nxumalo's journey began in Eswatini, where she was born on January 6, 2003, before moving to Alexandra, Johannesburg.

Known to her fans as Zee Nxumalo, Zandile Nxumalo draws inspiration from her rich cultural heritage and the vibrant sounds of Afro-pop and Amapiano. Her passion for music ignited at a young age, and she has since honed her craft by blending traditional elements with contemporary styles, creating a unique sound that resonates with audiences across the continent.

The public voting process of the awards ensures that the voices of fans are heard, making each recognition a true reflection of popular sentiment. This year's event highlighted the importance of fostering a legacy that honours those who have paved the way for future generations of women in music. Zee Nxumalo's artistry is deeply rooted in her cultural background, reflecting a blend of Swati and Xhosa influences.

Global rap sensation Don Toliver headlines DStv Delicious Festival

THE 12th DStv Delicious International Food & Music Festival, powered by LottoStar, is set to ignite the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit on September 20-21.

Headlined by global rap sensation Don Toliver alongside South African icons Kwesta and the dynamic duo Inkabi Zezwe (Sjava and Big Zulu), the festival promises a vibrant clash of musical cultures.

The Channel O Dance Stage will amplify the energy with a fusion of local and international dance music, celebrating South Africa's rich heritage.

Leading the charge is Don Toliver, a chart-topping rapper with over 30-million monthly Spotify listeners. He is known for collaborations with Travis Scott, SZA, Justin Bieber, and Doja Cat.

His hits like No Idea will blend seamlessly with the kasi flair of Kwesta and the traditional pride of Inkabi Zezwe, creating a unique musical experience.

"This line-up is a bold celebration of local and global talent, reflecting the diverse spirit of the DStv Delicious Festival," according to Funeka Peppeta, the event's media and

marketing director.

"The Channel O Dance Stage is where rhythm meets heritage. We're proud to curate a space where the continent's most exciting DJs and dance music innovators come together to celebrate the sounds that move South Africa.

"This year brings global and local legends to one dance floor. It's a powerful celebration of who we are and how we groove."

The Channel O Dance Stage will also pulse with a mix of Amapiano, Afro-House, Soulful House, Hip-Hop, Afro-Tech, 3-Step, and Gqom.

The stage kicks off with the electrifying Rap Academy (Success SA, Jus Gigi, Modercai, Royal Musiq, and o31 Choppa), joined by Uncool MC and Masterpiece YVK.

The tempo rises with the percussive beats of Distruction Boyz, followed by Kamo Mphela's mesmerising choreography.

International headliner ASHOJU, a Glastonbury Festival veteran, will bring Naija-infused rhythms, setting the stage for a soulful deep house finale by Metro FM Awards winner Oscar Mbo.

(Sunday World)



▲ Global rap sensation Don Toliver.



▲ Coco Ntshangase with her step mother, The Mommy Club star Nozipho Ntshangase.

Coco Ntshangase hits back at RHOD star Ameigh Thompson over ‘evil stepchildren’ remark

COCO Ntshangase, the stepchild of The Mommy Club star Nozipho Ntshangase, has responded angrily to Real Housewives of Durban (RHOD) star Ameigh Thompson's contentious remarks regarding stepchildren in a social media exchange that has South African reality TV fans in a frenzy.

The drama, which is playing out live on social media sites like Instagram, started when Coco posted a picture of herself taking selfies with Misokuhle Ntshangase, her new stepmother, which resulted in a harsh response from Thompson.

The controversy started when Thompson, a new cast member of RHOD Season 4, appeared to be referring to Coco's post on social media when she expressed her contempt for stepchildren.

Thompson stated: "There is nothing you can do for a child you did not bear. Their loyalties will always lie with their parent [no matter how toxic they are] and whoever holds Daddy's bank card."

She went further, urging mothers to stop making concessions for stepchildren and labelling "evil stepmothers" as enduring the longest, while those who try to build relationships face the greatest challenges.

Coco, the daughter of Zola Ntshangase, who recently married Misokuhle Mzizi as his second wife after 17 years of marriage to Nozipho, did not take kindly to Thompson's remarks. The photo of Coco and Misokuhle in a car together, shared on Instagram, was reposted by Thompson on her Instagram Stories with a lengthy rant about "evil stepchildren", using Coco as an example.

Coco took to her Instagram stories to express her lack of appreciation for the cyberbullying she has experienced.

"I just want to say I really don't appreciate the cyberbullying that's been going around," said Coco. "It's draining seeing people speak on things they honestly don't know much about; what was shared online is only a small part of what's really been happening."

(Sunday World)

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What Is Blood Sugar?

Checking your blood sugar is an important part of managing your diabetes. Learn what blood sugar is and how it connects to diabetes. (Photo Credit: E+/Getty Images)

High blood sugar (also called hyperglycemia or high blood glucose) is when there's too much glucose (sugar) in your bloodstream, typically because your body isn't using or producing insulin as well as it should. Insulin is a hormone that helps control blood sugar levels.

Normally, your pancreas releases insulin when your blood sugar, or blood glucose, gets high – after a meal, for example. This tells your body to absorb glucose until levels get back to normal.

But if you have diabetes, your body doesn't make insulin (type 1 diabetes) or doesn't respond to it normally (type 2 diabetes). That can leave your blood sugar too high for too long. Over time, this can damage nerves and blood vessels and lead to heart disease and other problems.

How much sugar in the blood is too much? And why is high blood glucose so bad for you? Here's a look at how your levels affect your health.

What Are Normal Blood Sugar Levels?

Healthy blood sugar levels are less than 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) after not eating (fasting) for at least 8 hours. And they're less than 140 mg/dL 2 hours after eating.

During the day, levels tend to be at their lowest just before meals. For most people without diabetes, blood sugar levels before meals hover around 70 to 80 mg/dL. For some people, 60 is normal; for others, 90.

What's a low sugar level? It varies widely, too. Many people's glucose won't ever fall below 60, even when they fast for a long time. When you diet or fast, the liver keeps your levels normal by turning fat and muscle into sugar. A few people's levels may fall somewhat lower.

Normal blood sugar levels

While fasting, your blood sugar levels should be between 72 and 99 mg/dL.

Two hours after eating, your levels should be no higher than 140 mg/dL.

Symptoms of High Blood Sugar

Symptoms of high blood sugar depend on whether you're in the early or later stages of the condition:

► **Early symptoms.** You'll feel thirstier, pee more often, get headaches, and have blurred vision.

► **Long-term symptoms.** If you've had hyperglycemia for a while, you may feel extremely tired (fatigued), lose weight, get skin or vaginal yeast infections, and have trouble healing from cuts or sores.

People with prediabetes, or a blood sugar level that's higher than normal, usually don't have any signs or symptoms of the illness.

Causes of High Blood Sugar

When you have diabetes, certain things can cause your blood sugar to rise, including:

- Being sick
- Stress
- Overeating foods with sugar or carbs

How sugar affects diabetes



- Being less active than normal
- Missing doses of insulin
- Your diabetes medicine isn't working well
- Taking steroids or other medicines
- Recovering from surgery

Diabetes Diagnosis

Doctors use these tests to find out if you have diabetes and prediabetes:

► **Fasting plasma glucose test.** The doctor tests your blood sugar levels after fasting for 8 hours. A level higher than 126 mg/dL indicates you have diabetes, while

100 to 125 mg/dL means you may have prediabetes.

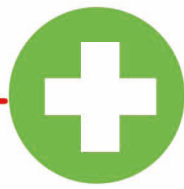
► **Oral glucose tolerance test.** After fasting for 8 hours, you get a special sugary drink. Two hours later, if your sugar level is higher than 200, this could mean diabetes, and 140 to 199 mg/dL suggests prediabetes.

► **Random check.** The doctor tests your blood sugar and it's higher than 200, plus you're peeing more, always thirsty, and you've gained or lost a lot of weight. They'll then do a fasting sugar level test or an oral glucose tolerance test to confirm the diagnosis.

► **A1c test.** This test averages your blood sugar level over a few months. A level below 5.7% is normal, while between 5.7% and 6.4% means you have prediabetes.

Any sugar levels higher than normal are unhealthy. Levels that are higher than normal, but not reaching the point of diabetes, are called prediabetes.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 96 million people in the U.S. have this condition, which can lead to diabetes if you don't make healthy lifestyle changes that your doctor suggests. It also raises the risk for heart disease, although



not as much as diabetes does. It's possible to keep prediabetes from becoming diabetes with diet and exercise.

High Blood Sugar

What are the dangers of high blood sugar? Glucose is precious fuel for all the cells in your body when it's present at normal levels. But it can behave like a slow-acting poison.

High sugar levels slowly make cells in your pancreas less able to make insulin. The organ overcorrects, and insulin levels stay too high. Over time, the pancreas is forever damaged.

High levels of blood sugar can cause changes that lead to a hardening of the blood vessels, what doctors call atherosclerosis.

Too much sugar can harm almost any part of your body. Damaged blood vessels cause problems such as:

- ▶ Kidney disease or kidney failure, requiring dialysis
- ▶ Strokes
- ▶ Heart attacks
- ▶ Vision loss or blindness
- ▶ A weakened immune system, with a greater chance of infections
- ▶ Erectile dysfunction
- ▶ Nerve damage, also called neuropathy, that causes tingling, pain, or less sensation in your feet, legs, and hands
- ▶ Poor blood flow to the legs and feet
- ▶ Slow wound healing and the potential for amputation, in rare cases

Keep your blood sugar levels close to normal to avoid many of these health problems. The American Diabetes Association's goals for blood sugar control in people with diabetes are 70 to 130 mg/dL before meals, and less than 180 mg/dL after meals.

How to Check Blood Sugar

If your doctor has recently diagnosed you with diabetes, they may ask you to keep track of your blood sugar by testing it at home with a special device called a blood glucose monitor or home blood sugar meter. It takes a small sample of blood, usually from the tip of your finger, and measures the amount of glucose in it.

Follow your doctor's instructions about the best way to use your device.

Your doctor will tell you when and how to test your blood sugar. Each time you do it, log it in a notebook, online tool, or an app. The time of day, recent activity, your last meal, and other things can all affect whether a reading will be of concern to your doctor. So try to log relevant information like:

- ▶ What medication and dosage you took
- ▶ What you ate, when you ate, or whether you were fasting
- ▶ How much, how intense, and what kind of exercise you were doing, if any

That will help you and your doctor see how your treatment is working. If your doctor has diagnosed you with prediabetes, they'll probably want to check your blood sugar levels once a year or more often.

Takeaways

If you're living with diabetes, tracking your blood sugar is an important part of managing the disease. The target for people with diabetes is 70 to 130 mg/dL before meals and less than 180 mg/dL after meals. Be sure to track it at home with a blood glucose monitor, and watch out for the signs of high blood sugar. **WebMD**

Psychological benefits of friendship

IF you've ever had a friend that you could laugh, cry, and share your most intimate secrets with, then you know how powerful friendship can be.

It's having someone in your life that can lift you up when you're low and celebrate your victories with you.

Friendships can have a major impact on your health and well-being, but it's not always easy to build or maintain them. Read on to understand the importance of friendships in your life and what you can do to develop and nurture new ones.

Benefits of Friendship

Friends not only prevent loneliness but they also:

- ▶ Increase your sense of belonging and purpose
- ▶ Boost your happiness and reduce your stress
- ▶ Improve your self-confidence and self-worth
- ▶ Help you cope with traumas, such as divorce, serious illness, job loss, or the death of a loved one
- ▶ Encourage you to change or avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as excessive drinking or lack of exercise
- ▶ Help put your problems in context to develop a stronger sense of meaning and direction
- ▶ Increase feelings of security and help protect against stress
- ▶ Ease the emotional impact of difficulties and offer new ideas about tackling them

Good times. Don't discount the simple pleasure of being in company with other people that you like. This can often lead to laughter and taking part in activities that raise the spirits and provide a distraction from the more serious side of life.

▶ **Reciprocity.** The give and take between partners in a friendship is an important part of the process. People enjoy doing something for someone they like. The reciprocity that exists in a relationship helps sustain it over time and ensures that the friendship lasts.

▶ **Friends also play a significant role in promoting your overall health.** Adults with strong social support are lower risk of many medical conditions. These include depression, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Why Friendship Matters

Advances in technology allow us to connect with anyone in the world with a click of a button. But having hundreds of friends online isn't quite the same as a few close friends you can really connect with on



a deep level. This doesn't mean you can't have buddies online. Just try to remember to prioritize face-to-face interaction too.

Tips for Making New Friends

When you're looking for a friend, try to find someone that you can trust. It's important to share a deep level of understanding and have good communication. Some things a good friend will do include:

- ▶ Show a genuine interest in your life, what you have to say, and how you think and feel
- ▶ Accept you exactly as you are
- ▶ Listen to you without judgment
- ▶ Not trying to tell you how to think and feel or changing the subject
- ▶ Share things about themselves, so you have an open exchange of vulnerability

▶ **Two-way street.** A friendship is a two-way street. Both individuals must feel comfortable supporting and accepting each other. This creates and shares a bond of trust and loyalty.

When you're looking for potential friends, consider the people you may have interacted with before. Think about people who:

- ▶ You've worked or taken classes with
- ▶ You've been friends with in the past but have since lost touch
- ▶ You've enjoyed chatting with at social gatherings
- ▶ You share family ties with
- ▶ Try putting yourself out there and reaching out to different people to see what resonates. Here are a few ways to do so.

▶ **Attend community events.** Look for groups or clubs that are set up to explore

an interest or hobby you have. You can find groups like this on social media, community bulletin boards, or other places online by doing a simple Google search for meetups in your area.

▶ **Volunteer.** Volunteering can be a great way to do something meaningful in your community and spark potential friendships too. It's easy to form strong connections when you work with people who have mutual interests.

▶ **Try new things.** Take a college or community education course to meet people who have similar interests. You can also explore classes at a local gym, senior center, or community fitness facility.

▶ **Join a faith community.** This can be a great way to get involved with social events, playing music, or aiding a cause that you believe in with people you like.

Psychological Limits of Friendship

Keep in mind that although friendship can be a powerful way to support you through all the ups and downs of your life, it's not a substitute for mental health treatment.

If you have emotional experiences that affect your ability to function, consider talking to a licensed mental health professional. Above all, stay positive. You may not become friends with everyone you meet, and that's okay! Maintaining a friendly attitude and demeanor can improve your life relationships. It also increases your chances of attracting more like-minded people into your life. **WebMD**

News In Pictures



▲ Surrounded by empty seats, Texas lawmakers say the pledge as the House is called to order, after Democratic lawmakers in Texas left the state to deny Republicans the quorum needed to redraw the state’s 38 congressional districts, at the Texas State Capitol in Austin, Texas.



▲ People watch as a waterspout forms between Sicily and Calabria, as seen from the Sicilian side in the city of Messina, Italy.



▲ People look at Kuala Lumpur’s skyline from an observation deck, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



▲ A protester is detained by NYPD SRG officers during a rally against the hunger crisis in Gaza, in New York City,.



▲ Defendant Jaqi X. arrives at the courtroom for a high-profile espionage trial, in Dresden, Germany.



▲ A person takes pictures with their phone at the esplanade, as Storm Floris hits Scotland, in Oban, Britain.



▲ Flames rise as firefighters battle the Gifford Fire in brush-covered hillsides west of New Cuyama, California.

German club backs out of signing Israel striker after fan backlash

BUNDESLIGA 2 side Fortuna Duesseeldorf has pulled out of signing Israel striker Shon Weissman in response to fan anger about his social media posts on the Gaza war, German tabloid Bild reported Tuesday. Fan furore erupted online on Monday when news emerged Weissman was on the cusp of joining Duesseeldorf from Spanish side Granada FC.

On Tuesday, the club tweeted: "We looked into Shon Weissman intensively, but ultimately decided not to sign him".

The club did not reveal the reasons for the decision, but Bild reported the club reacted to fan anger about social media statements from Weissman, who was already in Duesseeldorf and had completed a medical.

The centre-forward, who has 33 Israel caps, made several social media posts after the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel that set off the Gaza war.

Bild reported Weissman called for Israel to "wipe Gaza off the map" and to "drop 200 tons of bombs on it".

The 29-year-old had also liked posts saying "there are no innocents (in Gaza), they don't need to be warned".

Weissman, who deleted the posts soon after making them, has since said he made a mistake and was acting in the heat of the moment.

Duesseeldorf fans launched an online petition on Monday saying Weissman's "disrespectful and discriminatory" comments "are in stark contrast to the principles Fortuna stand for and try to promote".

Weissman has already been the



▲ Israel striker Shon Weissman.

subject of fan protests in Granada, who he joined in January 2023.

Bild reported Duesseeldorf and Weissman had planned to issue an apology statement for the posts, which was to be made public after the signing was made official.

After 22 months of combat sparked by the October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas that killed 1 219 people and saw hundreds kidnapped, the Israeli army has devastated large parts of the Palestinian territory.

More than 60 933 Palestinians have been killed, according to figures from Hamas-run Gaza's health ministry, and humanitarian agencies have warned that the territory's 2.4 million people are slipping into a catastrophic famine.

Germany, as it has sought to atone for the Holocaust, has long been a steadfast supporter of Israel, but concern has risen sharply over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The war has previously made an impact in professional football in Germany.

In 2023, Bundesliga side Mainz decided to sack player Anwar El Ghazi for statements made on social media about the conflict.

El Ghazi, a Dutch international with Moroccan roots, won a wrongful dismissal case in a German court against the club, who have since appealed.

Former Bayern Munich defender Noussair Mazraoui, now with Manchester United, apologised publicly after making several social media posts on the conflict, including one which called for "victory" for "our oppressed brothers in Palestine."

German football fans are heavily involved in major decisions, from signing players to setting fixtures, due to the so-called 50+1 regulation, (Supersport)

Man Utd, Newcastle make bids for Leipzig striker Sesko

PREMIER League sides Manchester United and Newcastle have both placed competing bids for in-demand RB Leipzig striker Benjamin Sesko, German tabloid Bild reported Tuesday.

The German tabloid said the Red Devils made an initial bid of 85 million euros (£73.9 million) on Tuesday for the 22-year-old centre forward.

Newcastle had offered a reported 80 million euros for the striker on Saturday, upping that to 85 million with bonuses on Monday.

The Slovenia striker scored 13 goals and laid on five assists in a disappointing league campaign for Leipzig last season. He has scored 16 times in 41 appearances at international level.

Sesko was stood down from Saturday's home friendly against Serie A side Atalanta, won 2-1 by the visitors due to a potential transfer.

Leipzig sporting director Marcel Schaefer confirmed this, saying Sesko would not play "due to the very concrete interests from several clubs."

United are rebuilding after their



▲ Leipzig striker Benjamin Sesko.

worst top-flight campaign in 51 years, along with defeat to Tottenham in the Europa League final.

United were toothless in attack and have already brought in forwards Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumo in the summer window.

Sesko's arrival could push under-pressure striker Rasmus Hojlund towards the exit, with reports

emerging United could sell the Denmark forward for 35 million euros, less than half of what they paid to bring him from Atalanta in 2023.

Newcastle qualified for the Champions League with a fifth-placed finish last season but are reportedly in danger of losing striker Alexander Isak to Premier League champions Liverpool. (Supersport)

Hamilton still battling speculation, this time self-inflicted

FORMULA One's August break will be a welcome getaway for Lewis Hamilton after he triggered fresh speculation about his Ferrari future with self-critical and cryptic comments in Hungary at the weekend.

The most successful Formula One driver of all time, with seven world championships and a record 105 wins, has had a tough start to his time at Maranello and has yet to stand on the podium in 14 races.

The 40-year-old Briton has also been sending out conflicting messages, his season a roller-coaster of highs and lows – downbeat assessments and despondency followed by peaks of elation and hope.

In Canada in June he assured reporters he was at Ferrari for the long term.

"To everyone writing stories of me considering not racing – I literally only just started here with Ferrari," he said at the time.

"There's no question where my head's at and what I'm working towards achieving with this team. So, there's zero doubts. Please stop making stuff up."

At the Hungaroring last Saturday, after qualifying 12th, he described himself as "useless" and suggested Ferrari might want to replace him.

Post-race, also 12th, Hamilton said there was a lot going on in the background – without explaining – and he looked forward to returning after the break – "hopefully".

BRITON FRUSTRATED

Current boss Fred Vasseur and former principal at Mercedes Toto Wolff saw that as just Hamilton being Hamilton, with the former saying the Briton was frustrated and not demotivated.

Wolff said Hamilton had always worn his heart on his sleeve, beating himself up about his performances.

With Mercedes in Brazil last year he hinted in a radio message that he might not finish

the season, saying later that in the moment he had not wanted to continue.

There are legitimate doubts about whether Hamilton can achieve what he wants – the unfinished business of a record eighth title – at Ferrari.

He has not won a race for more than a year, not started on pole for more than two, and is enduring the worst podium drought of his stellar career with 16 successive races outside the top three.

Sunday was his lowest career finish in Hungary, a circuit where he has triumphed a record eight times and taken nine poles.

Teammate Charles Leclerc has been on the podium five times this season and started on pole on Sunday.

The Briton won a Shanghai sprint from pole in March but has been out-qualified 10-4 by Leclerc and beaten 11-2 in races, with both disqualified in China.

Last season, Hamilton was out-qualified 18-6 by Mercedes teammate George Russell and was beaten 15-9, although they ended up with two wins apiece.

The rules are changing next year, the start also of a new engine era, and Hamilton has already said this season is all about settling in before a proper challenge in 2026.

"Lewis has unfinished business in F1," said Wolff. "You ask me whether he has it, he definitely has it."

Some others are questioning how much longer he should continue.

"Sad to see Sir Lewis so downhearted. It's tough to know when it's time. Another year? It gets harder. Maybe a good holiday is needed?," commented 1996 champion and compatriot Damon Hill on X.

"Lewis is tired. He's been doing what he is doing forever. He needs a rest from it for good, a total reset to do something completely different," former F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone told the Daily Mail.

(Supersport)



▲ Lewis Hamilton.

Former Arsenal player Partey granted bail on rape charges

FORMER Arsenal footballer Thomas Partey was granted conditional bail on Tuesday after appearing in a London court on rape and sexual assault charges.

The 32-year-old Ghana international has been charged with five counts of rape against two women and one count of sexual assault against a third woman.

The alleged offences took place between 2021 and 2022, when he was an Arsenal player.

Partey was charged on July 4, four days after leaving the Gunners when his contract expired at the end of June.

The midfielder stood with his arms behind his back in the dock at Westminster Magistrates' Court on Tuesday, wearing a black zip-neck jumper.

The footballer showed no reaction as the charges were read out and was not asked to enter any pleas.

Partey's lawyer Jenny Wiltshire previously said Partey "denies all the charges against him", adding he welcomed "the opportunity to finally clear his name".

Under his bail conditions he cannot contact any of the three women and must notify police of any permanent changes of address or international travel.

Reports in recent days have linked Partey

with a move to LaLiga club Villarreal.

As bail conditions were discussed in court, chief magistrate Paul Goldspring said: "I understand he's no longer employed in this country and playing in Spain now."

Partey is due to appear at London's Old Bailey court on September 2.

A spokesperson for Arsenal Supporters Against Sexual Violence said the group was "profoundly disappointed" in the London club over their handling of the matter.

Speaking outside court, Honour Barber told the PA news agency: "We never wanted to be in a situation where the club that we love and the club that has values that we believe in was playing, week-in, week-out, a player who is now facing court appearances on six counts of sexual violence.

"We protested outside almost every home game last season because we wanted to disrupt the wall of silence that the club has put up around this issue."

Barber said the group wanted the club to publish their sexual violence policies, "suspend anyone under investigation for sexual offences" and "properly support the survivors".

British police said they first received reports of an allegation of rape in February 2022.

Partey joined Arsenal for £45 million (\$60 million) from Atletico Madrid in October



▲ Former Arsenal footballer Thomas Partey. 2020.

He appeared 52 times for the Gunners last season, scoring four goals. Overall he played 167 games for the club, scoring nine times.

Partey has also made 51 appearances for Ghana.

An Arsenal spokesman previously said: "The player's contract ended on June 30. Due to ongoing legal proceedings the club is unable to comment on the case."
(Supersport)

Cadillac will add value as 11th F1 team, says McLaren's Brown

CADILLAC'S arrival in Formula One next year as an 11th team will bring added financial value with new partners and more fan engagement rather than diluting resources, according to McLaren's American chief executive Zak Brown.

The General Motors-backed team have taken staff already from rival outfits, their European headquarters at Silverstone being close to other factories, and are also competing for sponsorship.

Brown, whose team are dominating this year's championship after winning the 2024 constructors' title, saw no reason to fear a dilution of resources, however.

"I think on employees they are definitely going to take a lot more than they give, which is fine," he said at last weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix. "My general view is if someone wants to go work for a rival team then shame on me.

"For sponsors, I think they'll bring more new to the table than take."

Brown expected Cadillac also to bring more competition eventually, although they faced a tough challenge as newcomers, and more fans to a series that now has three US rounds and a growing audience in America.

"Will we get a better US TV deal, more American presence? I think their sponsors and Cadillac will spend money in the sport, the teams get a per centage of that so I see them as a value add to the sport," he



▲ Zak Brown.

added.

"I'm not worried about maybe some of the short term-ness of they are going to take an employee here or there or poach a sponsor here or there. I think the contribution will be bigger than that."

Cadillac secured approval of their bid in March, after a 764-day entry process and initial opposition from Formula One and the other 10 teams wary of a potential reduction in the share of revenues.

The team are also backed by TWG Global, whose CEO Mark Walter has an estimated net worth of \$12.5 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

The first new team since US-owned Haas debuted in 2016 said in July they were already two thirds of the way towards a targeted headcount of 600 by next season and no longer even the smallest outfit.

(Supersport)

Zverev ignores fan distraction to advance to ATP Toronto semis

ALEXANDER Zverev reached his 21st Masters 1000 semifinal on Monday by ending the Canadian title defence of Alexei Popyrin 6-7 (8/10), 6-4, 6-3 at the ATP Toronto Masters.

The final game, with Zverev serving at 5-3, was interrupted by shouts from an unruly fan who was tossed out by security.

The distraction ended a run of 14 consecutive points on serve, with the seed double-faulting once he was able to continue serving. He finished off the evening with a sharp volley winner at the net on his first match point.

Zverev completed his 40th win of the year in just over two and a half hours.

The world No 3 won the tournament in 2017 but had not been past the quarterfinals in Canada since.

He will bid for the oddly scheduled Thursday final against the later winner from Karen Khachanov and Alex Michelsen.

"After losing the first set, I had to tell myself we were both playing well," the holder of seven Masters trophies said.

"I had one or two mistakes at the end of the first, but it was a high-level match.

"I felt that if I kept playing well, I would get my chances – and I did. I can't complain about the second and third sets."

(Supersport)



▲ Alexander Zverev.

EOCGA congratulates Africa school games medallists

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) has congratulated the country’s bronze medallists in the inaugural African School Games. This comes after the duo Siphwokuhle Ndlela and Khetselo Mziyako won three bronze medals at the continental games in Algeria. Siphwokuhle was the best performer in

the games, winning two bronze medals in taekwondo, while Khetselo won one bronze medal in Boxing. Siphwokuhle will earn E20 000 from the Government incentive program under the ministry of Sports, Culture, and youth affairs. Khetselo will earn E10 000 from the ministry. “Let’s celebrate our medallists for their impressive performances at the inaugural School Games. Siphwokuhle Ndlela secured two bronze medals in Taekwondo, while Khetselo Mziyako earned a bronze in boxing.

Well done to both athletes for proudly representing Eswatini on the international stage,” the organisation said. The team is expected to return home on Wednesday evening from the North African country. The team was headed by EOCGA board member Ntombikayise Masango as the chef de mission while Eswatini School Sports Association president Zakhele Myeni was the General Team Manager.



▲ Siphwokuhle Ndlela.



▲ Members of the Buhleni Build It Under 13 pick with dignitaries during the competition held over the weekend.

Buhleni Under-13 pick team revealed

THE Buhleni Build-It Under 13pick team has been revealed. This follows the successful staging of the annual development tournament at the Buhleni Sports Ground. The 20-ember pick team will represent the constituency during the national finals set to take place before the end of the year at a venue still to be announced. Skom Academy has five players in the team, followed by Bombers with four. Eswatini Football Association (EFA) marketing and Communications Officer Muzi Radebe confirmed the lists. “We are happy with the progress of the tournament as we have future talents emerging from these competitions. We plead with parents to continue supporting this initiative,” he said. The next edition of the regional competitions will take place in Piggs Peak.

- The full list
- 1. Siwakhile Mathunjwa - Skom Academy
 - 2. Mpendulo Gule - Skom Academy
 - 3. Wandile Dlamini - Skom Academy
 - 4. Mcebo Mabuza - Skom Academy
 - 5. Mayenziwe Dlamini - Skom Academy
 - 6. Wakhile Lubisi - Jb Arsenal
 - 7. Okwezulu Dlamini - Swallows
 - 8. Senzelwe Dlamini - Swallows
 - 9. Musa Mkhumbane - Swallows
 - 10. Sinovuyo Maziya - Lomakhaphaza
 - 11. Nkhosephayo Kunene - Bombers
 - 12. Buve Dlamini - Bombers
 - 13. Blessing Mthupha - Bombers
 - 14. Loyiso Mhlanga - Bombers
 - 15. Wonder Madlazi - Bombers
 - 16. Mpilo Vilane - Fontotje
 - 17. Okuhle Dlamini - Fontotje
 - 18. Aphiwe Vilakati - Fontotje
 - 19. Sinakekelo Hlatshwako - Celtics
 - 20. Given Sifundza - Celtics



▲ Royal Flames ladies team.



▲ Green Lightning male team.

Royal Flames, Green Lightning conquer ENNA pre-season cup

ROYAL Flames and Green Lightning had a perfect start ahead of the new netball season. The two teams won the Eswatini National Netball Association (ENNA) preseason tournament held over the weekend. Flames conquered the female category with a 30-15 victory over Buffaloes while Green Lighting won the males category with 26-10 win over Vixens. ENNA Secretary Nkabindze Shabalala congratulated the two teams for their achievement. “We would like to thank all participating teams for their dedication, sportsmanship, and competitive spirit throughout the tournament. Congratulations to the Royal Flames (Women’s Category) and Green Lightning (Men’s Category) for their outstanding performances and well-deserved victories,” he said. He further thanked various stakeholders for supporting the tournament and their

readiness for the 2025 season. “The tournament showcased promising talent and has set a positive tone for the upcoming netball season. We encourage all teams to continue training and developing their skills.We also appreciate the support from coaches, officials, and fans who contributed to making this event a success. We are looking forward to the start of the SBS Netball Leagues and other exciting competitions ahead,” he said. The national team will attend the 2025 African Cup set to take place before the end of the year in Malawi. Pre-Season Netball Tournament 2025 Women’s Category Group A Results 1. Royal Flames 32 – 17 Manzini Ladies 2. Royal Flames 37 – 4 RES 3. ABC Academy 25 – 15 Manzini Ladies 4. Royal Flames 35 – 9 ABC Academy 5. ABC Academy 23 – 8 RESC

6. Manzini Ladies 23 – 6 RESC Group B Results 1. Buffaloes 23 – 9 Olympia 2. Vixens 17 – 24 Olympia 3. Vixens 10 – 29 Buffaloes Semi-Finals 1. Royal Flames 36 – 10 Olympia 2. ABC Academy 27 – 30 Buffaloes Final Placement Matches - 1st & 2nd Place: Royal Flames 30 – 15 Buffaloes - 3rd & 4th Place: ABC Academy 24 – 16 Olympafrica - 5th & 6th Place: Vixens 25 – 20 Manzini Ladies Final Standings (Women) 1. Royal Flames 2. Buffaloes 3. ABC Academy 4. Olympafrica

5. Vixens 6. Manzini Ladies 7. RES Men’s Category 1. Green Lightning 33 – 7 Ballbusters 2. Green Lightning 31 – 10 Buffaloes 3. Buffaloes 20 – 10 Ballbusters 4. Ballbusters 12 – 37 Vixens 5. Buffaloes 14 – 21 Vixens 6. Green Lightning 24 – 15 Vixens Placement Matches - 1st & 2nd Place: Green Lightning 26 – 10 Vixens - 3rd & 4th Place: Buffaloes 24 – 13 Ballbusters Final Standings (Men) 1. Green Lightning 2. Vixens 3. Buffaloes 4. Ballbusters

FNB ESWATINI CHALLENGE 2025

Not here to be second — King’s Cup Golf champ



▲2025 King Cup champion Keenan Davids has declared his readiness for the tournament.

By Chris Dlamini

“I DON’T care who’s around and who’s not.”

These were the words of a confident Keenan Davids, the South African (SA) professional golfer who won last year’s King’s Cup Golf in the country. Spotted among a host of top professionals at the Ezulwini Golf Course during the FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025’s first day of the PRO-AM, Davids declared he was ready to fight for the title. He won E166 000 as the King’s Cup Golf champion and now stands to walk away with E317 000 in this tournament. “It’s good to be back in the Ezulwini Golf Course, and yes, I’ll be back to defend the King’s Cup title. For now, it’s a good week for me as I’ve been in Europe going up and

down for two months. I just got back and here to play the FNB Eswatini Challenge. I’m not phased about who’s here. We are all here to do the job. I’m not here to be number two. I know the course and I’ll try to go all the way to win it. “It’s always an honour to return to Eswatini. It’s one of my favourite places,” said Davids. He said he was going to give it his best shot. “But I’m also here to have fun and mingle. Yes, there’s a few great players. In fact, all of them are great players here, but if it’s your week, it’s your week, you never know,” he said. Meanwhile, Davids had just spent a couple of hours since arriving for the FNB Challenge on Tuesday. He said those he asked about the course, told him the greens were rolling fine, and ‘that’s enough for me’.

By Chris Dlamini

ESWATINI is already reaping the fruits of the national FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025.

With the kick-off of the fourth edition this week, hotels and catering companies are set to make money from incoming golfers who gave travelled to the tiny Kingdom. Even before then, FNB Eswatini had already ensured that the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club had its course well managed and maintained weeks ahead of the competition starting on Thursday until Saturday. “As the tournament approaches,

Ezulwini Golf Course has become a hub of preparation. Groundskeepers are hard at work landscaping, pruning, and preparing the fairways for what promises to be a thrilling showdown. The tournament’s impact goes far beyond sport,” read a media release. Local hotels, catering companies, and décor services were seeing increased demand. “Local caddies have been hired, and handicraft vendors will be showcasing and selling their goods at the Royal Swazi



▲Local and international golfers flexing their muscles ahead of the 2025 FNB Eswatini Golf Challenge.

FNB’s SA champ misses out

By Chris Dlamini

THE fourth edition of the FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025 will kick off without its previous winner. The tournament gets underway from August 7-9 at the Ezulwini Golf Course, but defending champion Daniel van Tonder, a South African, is not part of the Sunshine Tour golfers in this E2 million sponsored tournament. Information gathered is that he now plays in Europe on a full-time basis. This leaves the competition wide open. “The spotlight shifts to former champions Jaco Prinsloo (2022) and Peter Karmis (2023), who are expected to headline the tournament alongside a strong field of

emerging local talent. “The mix of seasoned international professionals and ambitious local players promises an exciting and high-stakes showdown on the fairways of Ezulwini Golf Course,” partly read a media release. Meanwhile, a strong field of international professional golfers from across the globe will descend at the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club for the national golf event. There are golfers from England, France, Germany, Scotland, Korea, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Sweden, Australia, Indonesia, Scotland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa (SA), set to join about 12 local professionals, totalling around 120 golfers. **Last Three Champions:**
2022 - Jaco Prinsloo
2023 - Peter Karmis
2024 - Daniel van Tonder



▲The Ezulwini Golf Club golf course for the 2025 FNB Eswatini Golf Challenge.

FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025 beyond just sport

Golf Club entryway over the course of the tournament. In keeping with sustainability goals, the Ezulwini Municipality, an official in-kind partner, will oversee waste segregation and help ensure environmentally responsible practices throughout the event,” organisers affirmed. FNB Eswatini has extended an invite to members of the public, saying they are warmly welcome to attend and enjoy the tournament in person. “Spectators can take in the thrilling live action at Ezulwini Golf Course, support local players, and

experience a festive atmosphere filled with sportsmanship and local crafts,” reads an excerpt from the tournament organisers. Some of the local professionals are James Pennington, Brendon Rennie, Albert Zungu, MJ Dlamini, Nhlanhla Mtsetfwa, and Nicholus Vilakati. The competition will intensify on Friday as of the 120 golfers, only the top 50 will advance to the final round on Saturday for to battle for the main prizes, including the E317 000 (US\$17, 678, 68) grand prize as per Tuesday’s exchange rate.

New wheels for Highlanders AM FC

By Sibusiso Masilela
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MBABANE Highlanders AM FC are moving in a new direction under the guidance of new president Shauwn Mkhize.

Mkhize has reportedly brought a new bus for the capital city giants, which is set to be unveiled during the team gathering scheduled for August 23, 2025.

The bus has already been branded with the team's new colours of gold and black by an unnamed South African company.

The Irizar 70-seater model is worth over E1million, and it will soon be used by the Ernest Mavuso led side during its ongoing pre-season camp in Pietermaritzburg.

A source within the Highlanders revealed that the club president has already brought the new asset for the team.

"The team will be using the new bus during the 2025/26 season, and it will be delivered before the supporters during the gathering," the source said.

Highlanders AM President Shauwn Mkhize said the club would make its announcements on August 23, 2025.

"We will unpack the latest developments in the team, including new players and coaches, during the team's gathering that will take place on August 23, 2025," she said.

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

The flamboyant KwaZulu-Natal businesswoman further announced former Royal AM Boss Richard Makhoba as the club's General Manager.

The KwaZulu-Natal-born director is the second South African businessperson to lead Highlanders after Tshwane-based politician Chief Ally Kgomongwe.

She has become the first female leader of the capital city giants.

She has followed the footsteps of the late Busi Dlamini in the list of female leaders for Premier League clubs.

The late Dlamini oversaw the defunct Red Lions FC.



▲ The new Mbabane Highlanders AM FC bus.

'Touch', Bhekani challenge EFA elections

THE eagerly awaited Eswatini Football Association elections could be thrown into disarray.

This is due to the decision by two disqualified candidates, Peter 'Touch' Magagula and Bhekani Khumalo, who sought to join the executive committee in the upcoming four-year term.

Magagula and Khumalo were both nominated for the executive member position ahead of the elective assembly scheduled for August 17, 2025, at the Hilton Garden Inn.

The two administrators were not part of the candidates announced by the Chairman of the EFA ethics committee, Siphosini Dlamini, on Tuesday at Sigwaca House.

Another disqualified candidate is former vice president and COSAFA competitions committee Chairman Timothy Shongwe.

Magagula and Khumalo both confirmed the latest news when both were contacted on Tuesday.

The Chairman of Ethics said no appeals had been received during the briefing.

"We haven't received any complaint from the appeals, and I can be in a better position to comment once I get something official," he said.

He further revealed that campaigns will take place on August 9, 2025, at a venue still to be confirmed.

The president position will be contested by the incumbent president, Peter 'Samora' Simelane, and Mashumi Shongwe.

The vice President position will be battled by the likes of Steve Horton, Sonnyboy Mabuza, Nkosingiphile Shongwe, Nichodemus 'Ace' Maswama, and Simanga Nhleko.

The executive member position battle will be between Sicelo Nene, Musa Mamba, Aaron 'Katalala' Mavimbela, Sibusiso 'Scorpion' Nxumalo and Phumzile Dlamini.

Dlamini will also contest with Sindi Dlodlu in the Women's executive member position.

Ex-'Bull' coach for Green Mamba

Former Mbabane Highlanders coach Bongani Mhlongo has resurfaced at Green Mamba.

Mhlongo has replaced the 'Black Bull' coach Ernest Mavuso at the Correctional Services side.

Mavuso recently rejoined the capital city giants. He will work with Sandile Lulane and Mbuso Gina at 'Inyoka Eluhlazana' technical bench.

He will start drilling the team at the end of the Correctional Services games currently taking place in Namibia.

Green Mamba Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mandla Sibiya confirmed the latest news when reached for comment.

"It's true that Bongani Mhlongo is our head coach and we are happy to have a coach of his calibre," he said.

Mhlongo worked at Highlanders between the 2018/19 season during the era of former Chairman Zweli Jele with Zimbabwean coach Saul Chaminuka.

He once had stint with the defunct Red



▲ Former Mbabane Highlanders coach Bongani Mhlongo.

Lions. Green Mamba have recently signed former Moneni Pirates midfielder Lindani 'Rio' Matsenjwa and they are assessing ex Tanzania based playmaker Banele 'Pupu' Sikondze.

Buffaloes eyeing COSAFA qualifiers finals

THE country's reigning Women's Football league champions, Young Buffaloes Ladies, are targeting to reach the finals of the 2025 COSAFA African Women's champions League qualifiers.

This was revealed by the army side head coach Fisiwe Hlophe following the draw of the annual regional qualifying tournament.

Buffaloes were pitted against Gaborone United and Kick for Life in Group B of the regional qualifiers scheduled to take place before the end of the month in Gauteng.

"We are happy with the draw and want to do better than last year by reaching the finals of this year's competition. I have faith in my players that they will do well in the tournament," she said.

The champions and runner of the tournament will represent the country in the African Women's Champions League.

Buffaloes are also the first winners of the new Ingwenyama Cup women's cup, and they reached the semifinals of the previous edition of the regional qualifiers.



▲ BuFfaloes Ladies.



▲ Peter 'Touch' Magagula.



▲ Bhekani Khumalo.



Ex-Arsenal player gets bail on rape charges

Page 20

Former 'Bull' coach for Green Mamba

Page 23



Eswatini Wednesday 6
August, 2025
Daily News
Sport



New set of wheels for Mbabane Highlanders AM FC

● Mbabane Highlanders AM FC new President Shauwn 'MaMkhize' Mkhize purchases over E1 million Irizar 70-seater model which will be officially unveiled during the team's get-together on August 23, 2025. **Page 23**