



King wants two Turkmenistan companies to operate in Eswatini



By King’s Office Correspondents

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN — Just a day after the Kingdom of Eswatini and Turkmenistan established diplomatic relations, His Majesty the King wants two major Turkmenistan companies to open their offices in the country.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

▲His Majesty King Mswati III and Inkhosikati Make LaMotsa tour the Türkmenbaşy International Seaport in Turkmenistan. The port is a “sea gate,” linking Central Asia to Europe by sea, road and rail routes and serves as a major transit hub.



Senate President pledges commitment to implementing the Grand Plan

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King wants two Turkmenistan companies to operate in Eswatini

By King's Office Correspondents

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN — Just a day after the Kingdom of Eswatini and Turkmenistan established diplomatic relations, His Majesty the King wants two major Turkmenistan companies to open their offices in the country.

The King, accompanied by Inkhosikati LaMotsa, Emazinyane Princess Sikhanyiso, Princes Sicalo, Lindani, Princess Nqobile and Ministers Pholile Shakantu of Foreign Affairs and Chief Ndlaluhlaza of Public Works, toured Türkmenbaşy Oil Processing Complex (TNGIZT) and Türkmenbaşy International Seaport to be apprised and establish links with the view to working closely with the Kingdom.

The King's tour of these two major facilities took place on the sidelines of the third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). The experience from these tours is expected to aid in the establishment of the E5.2 billion Strategic Oil Reserve to be built at Phuzamoya in Siphofaneni, commencing before the fall of the year.

His Majesty the King was taken through the company's operations by General Director Cishiywe Dovran Gurbangeldiyevich and Deputy Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources Batyr Jumayev, who informed him that it was established in 1943.

"TNGIZT is involved in the processing of oil and gas condensate, the production of various oil and petrochemical products and their sale in the domestic and foreign markets.

"The production capacity of the complex of plants includes a number of oil refineries, as well as a number of oil refineries that increase the depth of primary oil refining. The company produces over 150 oil products amongst which are types of products produced at the complex includes amongst which is jet fuel purifier, diesel fuel water purifier, paraffin, olefin alkylation and light gas isomerizer, production of polypropylene



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III and the Eswatini delegation during the meeting at the Türkmenbaşy International Seaport in Turkmenistan.

coatings, bitumen, general oil coating, drying oil coating, polypropylene and polypropylene packages," he said, to name just a few.

The complex is completed with power-generating gas turbine plants, seawater desalination plants, steam generators, secondary water coolers, pumping stations, tank farms, power plants and other auxiliary facilities.

Dovran stated that their high-quality oil and petrochemical products produced at the Türkmenbaşy Oil Processing Complex are exported to different directions, namely to Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

His Majesty the King expressed the country's interest in partnering with the company and in future considering establishing strong links and sales agreements that would see the company's products reaching Eswatini.

The King said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will soon make follow-ups to see what could be done to ensure that relations between the two countries are strengthened and open more trade opportunities.

From the Türkmenbaşy Oil Processing Complex, the King and his delegation toured Türkmenbaşy International Seaport, where he also had an interest in the possibilities of opening trade routes and further benefit



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III being shown some of the oil products at the Türkmenbaşy Oil Processing Complex.

from the company's experience as a landlocked country in the movement of goods.

Yunus Kakabayor, the Channel's director, explained to the King that their port is involved in the movement of millions of cargo per annum to various markets across the world, especially in Central Asia, Europe and neighbouring countries.

Chief Ndlaluhlaza, the Minister of Public Works and Transport, expressed the country's interest in learning from Türkmenbaşy International Seaport, especially because the country was exploring options of joining the

International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

"The United Nations promotes that even landlocked countries should have access to the coasts and operate their own seaports. Part of the bilateral agreements we signed with Mozambique would assist in such an endeavour, hence our visit to this seaport here," the minister said in an interview.

The companies appreciated His Majesty the King's gesture to visit each one of them and indicated that it will forever remain in their records that such an esteemed guest visited their facilities.

By King's Office Correspondents

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN — Eswatini has shared its goal to transform itself into a regional technology hub to the global community.

The Minister for Information, Communication and Technology, Savannah Maziya, outlined how the nation is harnessing digital innovation to overcome its landlocked geography and drive inclusive economic growth.

This was during the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3), being held from 5-8 August 2025.

Reframing Eswatini's landlocked status as "land-linked," Minister Maziya emphasised the potential for connectivity and collaboration. "It is very important for countries that share the same structural positions to get together and share how best to create opportunities for their citizens," she said.

The nation, she said, is leveraging ICT to

access global markets and bring the world to its doorstep. "We in ICT see this positioning as a way to garner advantage in leading in the technology space," Maziya said, underscoring the goal of opening new markets and opportunities.

This vision aligns with the directive of His Majesty, King Mswati III, to transform Eswatini into a digitised, first-world nation. In this regard, she said a core focus is empowering marginalised groups, particularly youth and women, to participate fully in the economy. "We are focused on ensuring that we develop so as to ensure that the youth, women, and others who are currently marginalised are able to participate," Maziya noted.

By sharing its progress and plans for the coming years, Eswatini aims to learn from

and partner with other nations to achieve its goal of becoming a regional leader in technology. "We will certainly not let geography be our destiny," she affirmed.

Maziya's speech highlighted the power of collaboration, expressing Eswatini's enthusiasm for working with other landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). "We are honoured to be amongst colleagues who are searching for ways to be better and to develop more for the benefit of humanity," she said.

The LLDC3, themed "Driving Progress Through Partnerships," brings together over 3,000 delegates, including more than 20 heads of state, representatives from international organisations, civil society, youth, academia, and the private sector. Hosted in Turkmenistan's National Tourist Zone on

the Caspian Sea coast, the conference is addressing the challenges faced by the 32 LLDCs, home to over 500 million people.

These nations grapple with high transport costs, limited market access, and climate vulnerabilities due to their lack of direct sea access.

The event, supported by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), features five thematic round tables on issues like transport connectivity and trade enhancement.

The Awaza Programme of Action (2024-2034), adopted by the UN General Assembly, guides these efforts, aiming to foster sustainable development through regional cooperation.

Eswatini aiming to become Technology Hub — ICT Minister



▲ Senate President Lindiwe Dlamini has pledged Parliament’s commitment to implementing the Grand Plan for National Transformation her remarks.



▲ Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini making his remarks.

Senate President pledges Parliament’s commitment to implementing the Grand Plan for National Transformation

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
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SENATE President Lindiwe Dlamini has pledged that Parliament will play a crucial role in ensuring the Grand Plan for National Transformation transitions from mere documentation to tangible implementation.

This commitment, according to the Senate President, involves legislative refinement, thorough budget scrutiny, and ongoing oversight, all aimed at transforming the vision into a reality that impacts the lives of emaSwati. Prime Minister Russell Dlamini, alongside selected Cabinet Ministers, was

engaging Senators in Pigg’s Peak to discuss the Grand Plan, which embodies His Majesty’s vision for a developed Eswatini. The Prime Minister has called on Senators to unite in support of this ambitious initiative, which reflects the aspirations of the people articulated during the Sibaya gathering.

During the opening session of this critical engagement, the Prime Minister elaborated on how the Grand Plan aims to build upon the successes and lessons learned from previous development strategies while addressing existing gaps. He emphasised that the goal is to achieve sustainable economic prosperity over the next two to three decades.

“Past plans laid an important foundation,” the PM noted, highlighting gains in agricultural productivity, increased access

to basic education, and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). However, he pointed out that structural issues such as inadequate infrastructure, gaps in the health sector, and limited private sector development continue to hinder progress.

The Prime Minister framed the current moment as a pivotal juncture for Eswatini. “Today, Eswatini stands at a critical crossroads. Will we continue the path that has led us here today, or will we brave a different path altogether?” he asked. The Grand Plan represents the government’s ambition to aim higher than ever before and to explore new possibilities for the nation.

He further asserted that the kingdom should aspire to achieve high-income status within the next two to three decades,

positioning Eswatini among the world’s most developed countries, as frequently mentioned by His Majesty. “To get there, we need a deliberate and credible long-term strategy that corrals the whole of Government. We must work together to see this future materialise in the coming years,” he stated.

The Grand Plan proposes a transformative 30-year agenda anchored around three main pillars: Economic Transformation, Social Transformation, and Government Transformation. This framework is designed to build on previous successes while addressing their shortcomings, ensuring that growth is broad-based, socially inclusive, and institutionally sustainable.

FORMER Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Principal Secretary Phesheya Dube has transitioned to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade as Under Secretary.

Aiming to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations, the Civil Service Commission has announced a series of administrative and technical transfers of senior government officials.

This decision, confirmed by the Commission’s Chairman, Peter Mamba, is part of a broader strategy to strengthen the administrative and technical functions of government, thereby improving public service delivery across various sectors.

The announcement comes as part of the Commission’s ongoing efforts to ensure that the right personnel are in place to meet the evolving needs of the public and to facilitate a more responsive government. The changes, which take effect immediately, involve several key appointments that reflect a strategic realignment of responsibilities among senior officials.

The following movements have been officially confirmed: Gugu Shabangu has been transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Home Affairs, where she will serve as Under Secretary, Administration. Nhlanhla Motsa will now serve as Under Secretary, Administration at the Ministry of Agriculture, moving from his

Former ICT Ministry PS Phesheya Dube transitions to the Commerce Ministry as Under Secretary

previous position in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

Cebile Nhlabatsi has transitioned from the Ministry of Commerce to the Ministry of Public Service, taking on the role of Under Secretary, Administration. Antony Masilela, previously with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, has been appointed as Under Secretary, Administration at the Ministry of Health.

Richard Phungwayo has moved from the Ministry of Public Service to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, where he will also serve as Under Secretary, Administration. Mpumie Dlamini has shifted from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, where she will take on the role of Under Secretary, Administration. Ncamsile Mntshali, moving from the Ministry of Health, will now serve as Under Secretary, Administration at the Ministry of Education and Training.

Constance Vilakati moved from the Ministry of Tourism to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development as Under Secretary, Administration. Hlobisile Dlamini moved from the Ministry of Housing to the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs as Under Secretary, Administration. Vincent Dlamini moved from the Ministry of



▲ New Ministry of Commerce Under Secretary Phesheya Dube.

Public Works to the Ministry of Agriculture as Under Secretary, Technical.

Chairman Peter Mamba emphasised that these changes are designed to foster a more integrated approach to governance, where cross-sectoral expertise can lead to innovative solutions for public service

challenges.

He noted that the Civil Service Commission is committed to ensuring that government officials are not only well-positioned but also adequately equipped to respond to the needs of the citizens they serve.

By Thokozani Mazibuko

A 32-year-old man was arrested after being caught with a large consignment of compressed dagga smuggled from Eswatini, with an estimated street value of E4 million.

The dramatic arrest unfolded on the R33 highway near Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal on Monday, following a high-speed chase involving several elite police units. Acting on intelligence, members of the Glencoe K9 Unit, the Zululand Task Team, and Dundee Crime Prevention intercepted the suspect's vehicle, which was found to be carrying 90 bags of compressed dagga.

Police confirmed that the dagga had been smuggled across the border from Eswatini, a growing concern for law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border.

"The operation was a success thanks to collaboration and swift action from multiple policing units," said KwaZulu-Natal police spokesperson Colonel Robert Netshiunda. "This is a significant blow to cross-border drug trafficking syndicates operating between Eswatini and South Africa."

The suspect, whose identity has not been publicly disclosed, was expected to appear

SA cops seize E4mln dagga smuggled from Eswatini

in court yesterday to face charges related to drug trafficking and possession of illegal substances.

Authorities have not ruled out the possibility of further arrests, as investigations continue to determine the full extent of the smuggling network.

This latest seizure underscores the persistent challenges faced by border enforcement agencies dealing with the illegal flow of narcotics between Eswatini and South Africa.

It is worth noting that in recent months, both countries have ramped up efforts to tighten border controls and dismantle drug syndicates using rural routes and secondary roads to transport contraband.

It should be noted that the bust comes amid renewed calls from community leaders and anti-drug organisations for stronger collaboration between Eswatini and South African law enforcement to combat the scourge of drug trafficking and protect vulnerable communities.



UK, EU diplomats urge Eswatini to maximise SADC-EU trade opportunities

THE European Union-Southern African Development Community (EU-SADC) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) has been described as a vital tool for unlocking inclusive

growth, sustainable development, and regional economic transformation. This was the central message delivered by top European diplomats during the stakeholder validation workshop for the EU-SADC EPA Implementation Strategy and

Action Plan (2025-2029), held at the Royal Villas in Ezulwini.

British High Commissioner to Eswatini, Colin Wells, encouraged local businesses and stakeholders to fully exploit the trade and investment opportunities presented under the agreement. He emphasised that regional collaboration and proactive engagement in the EPA framework could open significant economic prospects for Eswatini and the wider SADC region.

"This is an opportunity to deepen trade relationships, strengthen value chains, and enhance market access between the SADC region and the European Union. Businesses must seize this moment to innovate, grow and expand their footprint," said High Commissioner Wells.

His sentiments were echoed by European Union Ambassador to Eswatini, Karsten Mecklenburg, who described the EU-SADC EPA as "a bridge between regions, a catalyst for inclusive growth, and a reminder that economic prosperity thrives when countries unite."

ment representatives, private sector players, development partners, and civil society stakeholders to validate the roadmap for the next phase of the EPA's implementation.

The EU-SADC EPA provides duty-free, quota-free access to the European market for goods originating in the SADC EPA states, including Eswatini. It also promotes regional integration, supports sustainable agriculture, and encourages fair trade practices.

It is worth mentioning that as Eswatini looks to diversify its economy and expand its export base, stakeholders say fully embracing and implementing the EPA will be key to enhancing competitiveness and boosting investor confidence.

The 2025-2029 Implementation Strategy is expected to be finalised and rolled out early next year.

● This is an opportunity to deepen trade relationships, strengthen value chains, and enhance market access between the SADC region and the European Union.



ESWATINI DAIRY BOARD

DAIRY CATTLE FARMING COURSE

Dairy Cattle owners, keepers and aspiring individuals are kindly invited to attend a **dairy farming training course** to be held at the **Board's Conference Room at Enguleni House, Manzini**. The course will commence on the **Tuesday, 12th August 2025** and run for **eight (8) weeks**. Selected days for training are **Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays** of each week starting at **5:30pm** till **7:00pm**.

MODULE
1 Introduction to Dairy Science and Management
2 Requirements and Preparations for Starting a Dairy Project
3 Fodder Production
4 Dairy Cattle Feeding
5 Dairy Cattle Breeding
6 Calf Rearing
7 Clean Milk Production
8 Legal Issues
9 Disease Prevention and Control
10 Business Plan Preparation and Business Management
11 Educational Tour

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Mr. Bandile Mdluli (Course Coordinator) - **(+268) 7662 4422**
Or call the Office @ - **(+268) 2505 8262/3**

BY MANAGEMENT



▲ The workshop brought together government representatives, private sector players, development partners, and civil society stakeholders to validate the roadmap for the next phase of the EPA's implementation.

10 yrs for killing another man for E50

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

A 37-year-old man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison without an option of a fine after killing another man for E50.

Nkosingiphile Makhiza (32) Magagula of Dvokolwako was sentenced by Principal Magistrate David Khumalo yesterday at the Manzini Magistrates Court.

This comes after he killed Simanga Gamedze by assaulting him with stones alongside Bafanabakhona Magagula (29) of Ngculwini area, who stabbed him with a knife.

However, Bafanabakhona is still at large as he escaped trial shortly after being granted bail. This resulted in the Crown, applying for a separation of trial in the matter, thus Nkosingiphile ended up being the only one sentenced so far.

Bafanabakhona will be tried separately as soon as he is re-arrested.

The partners in crime were both charged with Culpable Homicide, an offence they committed at New Village area on November 29, 2025.

According to one of the witnesses, Mfanawenkosi Nhlabatsi, when leading evidence before court, he was coming from work on the fateful evening of November 29, 2019 when he heard someone raising an



alarm.

"I proceeded to the spot, where the alarm was being raised and I found the accused before court together with Bafanabakhona assaulting the deceased," he said.

He mentioned that Bafanabakhona was carrying an okapi knife while Nkosingiphile was using stones to assault Gamedze, who was already lying down on the ground.

Nhlabatsi pointed out that Bafanabakhona used the knife to stab Gamedze.

"I told the two to stop what they were doing. When they had stopped and left the scene, the deceased stood up and told me that he was being attacked for E50. The deceased was badly injured and was bleeding. I left him and went home and when I returned to the scene, I found that he was dead," he said.

He mentioned that police were called to the scene and they ferried the lifeless body of Gamedze to the mortuary.

Nkosingiphile pleaded guilty to the charge and was found guilty as per his own plea.

He mitigated for a lenient sentence on grounds that he was married with three children, who were dependent on him. He also informed the court that he was a sickly person.

However, his mitigation did little on nothing to convince the presiding magistrate otherwise as he was given the aforementioned sentence.



REPS clamp down on copper thieves

THREE men were arrested for stealing copper cables belonging to Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) worth over E17 000.

Nhlanhla Makama (28) Simphiwe Makama (23) both from Phuzumoya area and Siboniso Shabangu (32) of Luve area appeared before Magistrates Lucia Lukhele at the Matsapha Circuit Court.

They were charged with theft after they stole a 75 metres long underground copper cable valued at E17 430.

They committed the offence on February 20, 2025 at Mahhala area.

They all pleaded guilty to the offence and they were found guilty as per their own pleas.

Nhlanhla mitigated for a lenient sentence on grounds that he was tempted by his co-accused to commit the offence.

He further mentioned that his wife was sickly.

"I apologise for committing the offence," he said.

Simphiwe on the other hand, pleaded for a lenient sentence based on the fact that he was apologetic for committing the offence, while Siboniso mitigated for a lenient sentence on grounds that he was a bread winner at home.

Nhlanhla was sentenced to one year in prison without an option of a fine, while Simphiwe and Siboniso were each sentenced to two years imprisonment without an option of a fine.

Person living with disability arrested for armed robbery

AN 18-year-old teenager, who is living with a speech impediment, has been arrested after allegedly committing two armed robberies.

This comes after Mlindo Maylo Shongwe, who appeared before Principal Magistrates Florence Msihi at the Manzini Magistrates Court yesterday, allegedly used a bush knife on January 11, 2025 to induce submission of a jacket from Thando Simelane worth E640.

He allegedly committed the offence at Logoba area.

On the same day at Kakhoza area, Shongwe is alleged to have used the same bush knife to induce submission of a Hisense cellphone valued at E1 500 and a black leather jacket

worth E350 from Fezile Masilela.

Shongwe, who was speaking through the assistance of an interpreter, applied for bail on grounds that they were two when they committed the offence and his co-accused, Thabiso Magagula has been granted same (bail) fixed at E2 000 and was already out of custody.

He further pointed out that prison was not a conducive place for him since he could hardly communicate with anyone.

"May I be granted bail, so that I can attend trial from home," he said.

However, the Crown mentioned that bail was opposed based on instruction from the investigating officer, who stated that Shongwe was a flight risk.

He further mentioned that Shongwe did not provide a permanent residential address, yet it was difficult to arrest him.

He added that Shongwe was vicious when committing the crimes and could not hear even when people were reprimanding him, hence denying him bail was in the best interest of his safety as he might be attacked by a mob in the event he committed another offence whilst out on bail.

He mentioned that the least they could do was to afford him a speedy trial.

As a result, Shongwe's bail application was therefore, denied. He was remanded in custody until August 13, 2025 pending trial.



Teen sentenced for assaulting mother

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BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Eswatini champions youth-led digital innovation

THE Kingdom of Eswatini is making its voice heard on two key development fronts, advancing youth-led digital innovation in Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and driving industrial competitiveness across the Southern African region. Speaking during the high-level session titled 'Driving Growth Youth-Led Innovation in Digital Development for Sustainable Economies in LLDCs' the Kingdom of Eswatini outlined a four-pillar strategy to unlock digital-led growth placing youth firmly in the driver's seat.

SADC industrial recognition: Eswatini takes the stage

AT the 2024/25 SADC Quality Awards in Antananarivo, Eswatini's private sector earned top honours across categories, affirming its growing stature as a regional player in manufacturing, export, and service excellence. Minister Manqoba Khumalo commended Eswatini's rising profile. "These awards are not just trophies they are signals that Eswatini is stepping confidently into its role as a quality-driven, industrially ambitious member of the SADC region. Our businesses are now regional benchmarks," he said.

Rand steady but tariff concerns linger

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand was steady in early trade on Wednesday, with investor focus still pinned on tariff updates before Washington's deadline. At 0724 GMT, the rand traded at 17.88 against the dollar, barely changed from Tuesday's close.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.4636	17.9268
G.B. Pound	23.1958	23.8701
EURO	20.2480	20.8547
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	

Minister calls for emaSwati to localise manufacturing sector

By Delisa Magagula

THE Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Mancoba Khumalo, has called on emaSwati to take ownership of the manufacturing sector, citing low participation by locals in an industry that continues to be dominated by foreign investors.

He made the remarks last week during the 19th edition of the Eswatini Entrepreneur of the Year Awards regional ceremony held in Manzini.

The event, which recognises and celebrates outstanding entrepreneurship, was attended by government officials, private sector representatives, business stakeholders and entrepreneurs from various sectors.

Khumalo said the manufacturing industry in Eswatini remained largely underdeveloped due to limited local participation, and emphasised the need for deliberate efforts by aspiring entrepreneurs to explore opportunities in the sector.

"Our manufacturing sector continues to be accommodated by foreign nationals. We want to see more emaSwati tapping into this sector. It is time we take it over, localise it and own it," said the minister.

He stated that while Eswatini has made progress in supporting small businesses and creating enabling policies for entrepreneurship, the local manufacturing industry still lacked significant local ownership.

He said this gap presented an opportunity for emaSwati to not only grow their own enterprises but also strengthen the national economy.

"The economy cannot grow to its full potential if our people are not fully participating in critical sectors. Manufacturing is one such sector that has the ability to transform livelihoods and create sustainable employment. We need to see our people active in that space," he said.

Khumalo explained that his ministry was actively working to ensure that more emaSwati were empowered with the tools and support needed to enter industries that remain underserved by local business owners.

"We are working around the clock as a ministry to make sure emaSwati have the economy in their hands. It should not be a foreign-led economy when we have capable and skilled citizens," he said.

The minister highlighted that the government was already working with stakeholders to remove barriers to entry in the sector and to increase access to infrastructure, financing, and technical support for entrepreneurs.

"There are existing interventions through our ministry and our partners to support manufacturers. What we now need is increased uptake by locals. The opportunity is there, and we are ready to walk with entrepreneurs through the process," he added.

Khumalo said entrepreneurship played a key role in industrial development and national economic growth, and noted that localising manufacturing would reduce the country's dependency on imports and improve the trade balance.

He also pointed out that many of the prod-



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo speaking during the EYA regionals.

ucts consumed in Eswatini are manufactured outside the country, including those that could be produced locally with sufficient investment and innovation.

"We are importing things that can easily be produced here. If we want to build a strong and resilient economy, we must stop exporting opportunities. We must be the ones supplying the goods we consume," Khumalo stated.

He further urged entrepreneurs in attendance to consider industrial production as a viable path, and not limit their ambitions to sectors that are already saturated.

"Everyone is doing the same thing. We need to diversify and explore new ground. Manufacturing is one of those sectors with real growth potential, especially for youth and women entrepreneurs," he said.

Khumalo acknowledged that the journey into industrial entrepreneurship was not without its challenges but reiterated government's commitment to offering consistent support through policy reforms, incentives, and capacity-building programmes.

He said the ministry would continue to engage with business development service providers, financial institutions, and the private sector to ensure that aspiring manufacturers were not left behind.

"We have institutions like SEDCO, SIPA, FINCORP and the SME Unit, among others,

that are all aligned to support the vision of increasing local participation in the economy. The structures are in place; what is needed now is participation," he said.

The minister noted that the Entrepreneur of the Year Awards were a platform to celebrate excellence and also identify gaps that need to be addressed.

"These awards are not just a recognition ceremony. They are a mirror that shows us what sectors we are excelling in and where we need to do more. We want to start seeing more manufacturers among the winners," Khumalo said.

He concluded by encouraging young people to take bold steps and seek out opportunities beyond traditional business models.

"Young people must not be afraid of big industries. The same energy used to build start-ups can be used to start production lines. Think big, act bold, and know that government is here to support you," he said.

The Eswatini Entrepreneur of the Year Awards are part of an ongoing national programme aimed at recognising and promoting excellence in business.

The initiative is supported by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade in partnership with local enterprise development agencies and private sector sponsors. The awards are held regionally ahead of the national awards ceremony scheduled for later this year.

By Delisa Magagula

Eswatini champions youth-led digital innovation

THE Kingdom of Eswatini is making its voice heard on two key development fronts, advancing youth-led digital innovation in Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and driving industrial competitiveness across the Southern African region.

Speaking during the high-level session titled 'Driving Growth Youth-Led Innovation in Digital Development for Sustainable Economies in LLDCs' the Kingdom of Eswatini outlined a four-pillar strategy to unlock digital-led growth placing youth firmly in the driver's seat.

"Without reliable broadband networks, local data centres, and cloud services, digital economies cannot take root," Minister of Commerce Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo stated.

He further mentioned that the country is currently rolling out a national fibre optic backbone and cloud-ready infrastructure to support smart logistics, e-government and youth-led enterprise.

Khumalo said, expanding ICT hubs, reducing internet costs, and financing digital devices are among the solutions being deployed to ensure that even rural youth have the tools to participate in the digital economy.

"Eswatini has underscored the importance of secure and interoperable digital payment systems. A fully digital trade ecosystem is

essential for unlocking the entrepreneurial energy of our youth," Khumalo stressed.

"Digital literacy isn't just about using a phone it's coding, cybersecurity, platform development. The country is upskilling software developers in both public and private sectors through the GovStack model to ensure scalable and interoperable solutions," Khumalo said.

To support youth entrepreneurs, Eswatini is actively incubating startups across AgriTech, EduTech, E-Commerce, and HealthTech, while pushing for regulatory simplification and market access links for graduating ventures.



▲ Minister of Commerce Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo.

SADC industrial recognition: Eswatini takes the stage

By Delisa Magagula

AT the 2024/25 SADC Quality Awards in Antananarivo, Eswatini's private sector earned top honours across categories, affirming its growing stature as a regional player in manufacturing, export, and service excellence.

Award Winners Include:

- Company of the Year (Large Enterprise): Eswatini Meat Industries
- Company of the Year (SME): National Disaster Management Agency
- Product of the Year (SME): Swazi Tiles Investments – Double-Roman Concrete Roof Tile
- Runners-Up: Cerba Lancoet (Service of the Year), RFG Eswatini (Exporter of the Year)
- Certificate of Recognition: Rannah Investments (SME Excellence)

Minister Manqoba Khumalo commended Eswatini's rising profile.

"These awards are not just trophies they are signals that Eswatini is stepping confidently into its role as a quality-driven, in-

dustrially ambitious member of the SADC region. Our businesses are now regional benchmarks," he said.

He stressed the dual importance of celebrating wins and deepening regional participation.

"We must not only showcase excellence but also shape the industrial future of Southern Africa. Through platforms like SADC Industrialisation Week, Eswatini is actively forging investor partnerships, accessing new value chains, and preparing to thrive in the energy transition and agro-industrial transformation," said Khumalo.

He emphasized that, whether through coding bootcamps or factory floors, Eswatini is positioning itself as a country where innovation and industrialisation walk hand in hand. Khumalo said with digital transformation embedded in national and regional policies, and youth innovation receiving tangible backing, the country is building sustainable engines of growth across both digital and physical infrastructure.

"As the continent moves toward a more interconnected and innovation-led future, Eswatini is proving that even landlocked countries can be regionally integrated, digitally enabled, and globally competitive," he concluded.



▲ Embiveni also took home an award.



▲ Winners of the SADC awards.

Eswatini validates strategy to boost EU trade under SADC agreement

THE Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade has taken a significant step in refining Eswatini's trade relationship with the European Union (EU), hosting a validation workshop aimed at reviewing and strengthening the implementation strategy of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

Speaking during the workshop held at the Royal Villas Hotel, Acting Principal Secretary Cebile Nhlabatsi reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring the private sector benefits fully from the trade agreement.

"We were happy to receive inputs from each one of you, especially on what has been achieved from the now expired implementation strategy and what needs to be done to ensure that Eswatini continues to benefit from this agreement," she told the stake-

holders gathered.

The EPA was initially signed in 2016 by Eswatini and five other SADC countries Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa with Mozambique joining in 2018.

The agreement is designed to promote regional integration, economic development, and better trade policy frameworks for SADC EPA states, while also opening up duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market.

Nhlabatsi emphasized that Eswatini's business community must continue to take full advantage of the benefits the EPA offers.

She also underlined the need for a strong and practical strategy that not only reflects stakeholder input but also translates into tangible trade outcomes.

"The Implementation Strategy, which will be accompanied by an action plan, highlights the issues and targeted interventions necessary for the country to benefit from the continued implementation of the Agreement,"

she said.

Key to the success of the updated strategy, Ms. Nhlabatsi added, is effective collaboration between the government and the private sector.

"Such collaboration will drive the implementation of this strategy and ensure that we see an increase in the number of products exported into the EU," she noted, pledging the government's support in helping local businesses explore and penetrate the European market.

The validation workshop was supported by the European Union through the Inter-

national Trade Centre and brought together senior government officials, private sector leaders, trade experts, and media representatives.

As the strategy nears completion, officials hope it will enhance the country's ability to increase exports, improve competitiveness, and integrate more deeply into global trade networks.

Nhlabatsi officially declared the workshop open, urging participants to continue working together to develop a results-driven strategy that can unlock new opportunities for Eswatini.

Dollar falls as traders bet on more rate cuts

By Karen Brettell

NEW YORK — The dollar dropped on Wednesday and the euro hit a one-week high as traders bet that the Federal Reserve will cut rates more times than previously expected this year, following weaker than expected jobs data for July.

With no major U.S. economic releases on Wednesday traders continued to focus on the implications from Friday’s jobs report.

U.S. employment growth was weaker than expected in July while the nonfarm payrolls count for the prior two months was revised down by a massive 258,000 jobs, suggesting a sharp deterioration in labor market conditions. The greenback fell sharply after the report, paring gains from what had been a relatively strong July for the currency, the first month this year in which the dollar index posted a gain.

“We had the first dollar bounce under Trump’s second term, and many people thought that maybe it had some legs, but I think Friday’s jobs data killed it,” said Marc Chandler, chief market strategist at Bannockburn Global Forex in New York. “The renewed speculation of not only a cut in September, but another cut at the end of the year, has capped the dollar’s bounce.”

Fed funds futures traders are now pricing in an 89 per cent probability of a 25 basis point cut at the Fed’s September meeting, up from 48 per cent a week ago, according to the CME Group’s FedWatch Tool. In total, traders see 58 basis points in cuts this year.

The Fed may need to cut interest rates in the near term in response to a slowing U.S. economy, even though it remains unclear whether tariffs will continue to push inflation higher, Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari said on Wednesday.

The dollar added to its drop on Friday after U.S. President Donald Trump fired a top Labor Department official, alleging data manipulation.



▲ U.S. dollar banknotes are seen in this illustration.

The dollar index was last down 0.33 per cent on the day at 98.41 and reached 98.36, the lowest since July 28. It posted a 1.35 per cent drop on Friday, the largest one day fall since April.

The euro rose 0.47 per cent to \$1.1628 and got as high as \$1.1636, the highest since July 28. It recorded a 1.48 per cent gain on Friday.

Investors are also focused on Trump’s expected nomination to fill a coming vacancy on the Federal Reserve’s Board of Governors and the candidates for the next Fed Chair.

Trump said on Tuesday he would decide on a nominee to replace outgoing Fed Governor Adriana Kugler by the end of the week and had separately narrowed the possible replacements for Fed Chair Jerome Powell to a short list of four.

Trump said he has narrowed his list of candidates to replace Powell to economic adviser Kevin Hassett, former Fed governor and Trump supporter Kevin Warsh, and two other people. Trump did not name those people, but one is thought to be current Fed Governor Christopher Waller.

“From what we can ascertain, Warsh seems to be the most hawkish of the three,

while Waller is clearly the most dovish, having dissented at the last FOMC meeting, so any shift in the odds towards the latter would likely be bearish for the dollar,” Matthew Ryan, Head of Market Strategy at Ebury said in a note.

The dollar fell 0.21 per cent to 147.3 yen . It fell 2.24 per cent against the Japanese currency on Friday, the largest daily drop since January 2023.

The greenback pared earlier gains against the Japanese currency after Taro Kono, touted as a candidate to become the next prime minister, said that Japan must balance its budget and push the central bank to raise interest rates to alleviate concern over the country’s finances.

Ruling party heavyweight Ken Saito, meanwhile, told Reuters that The Bank of Japan must be cautious about raising interest rates given the expected hit from U.S. tariffs on the fragile economy.

Sterling rose 0.19 per cent to \$1.3323 before the Bank of England on Thursday is expected to cut interest rates by 25 basis points.

In cryptocurrencies, bitcoin gained 0.56 per cent to \$114,293. (Reuters)



▲ The TotalEnergies logo sits on the company’s headquarters skyscraper in the La Defense business district near Paris, France.

TotalEnergies maintains buybacks despite profit drop

TOTALENERGIES reported a 23 per cent fall in second-quarter earnings on Thursday, the French oil major’s worst performance in four years but in line with expectations, as lower oil and gas prices outweighed a rise in production and power sales.

Adjusted net income fell to \$3.6 billion for the three months to June 30, down from \$4.7 billion a year earlier and \$4.2 billion in the first quarter.

Shares were down 4.1 per cent to 51.17 euros at 1335 GMT.

CEO Patrick Pouyanne told analysts on a call that the company could maintain shareholder returns in a low oil price environment, as several expressed concern about a sharp increase in the company’s net debt.

Brent crude prices have fallen 20 per cent from a year ago, reaching \$67.9 per barrel in the second quarter of 2025, as members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies such as Russia started to unwind output cuts of 2.17 million barrels per day in April.

TotalEnergies’ net debt leapt 89 per cent year-on-year to \$25.9 billion, pushing gearing - a measure of debt to equity - to 22.6 per cent including leases, as the company made \$2 billion of acquisitions and saw its working capital increase - even as it extended a \$2 billion share buyback into the third quarter.

“We have a strong balance sheet ... and we are committed to \$2 billion in quarterly buybacks at \$70 per barrel,” Pouyanne said on a call with analysts.

The CEO added that according to the company’s definition of normalised gearing, the ratio of debt to equity was 15 per cent.

He said that 15 per cent figure would not increase this year, as the company finalised sales of stakes in renewable assets and disposals of oil and gas assets in Nigeria, Argentina and other areas, expected to bring in some \$3.5 billion.

TotalEnergies’ integrated power business beat forecasts with a 14 per cent rise in quarterly profit to \$574 million, but was unable to offset poorer performance across nearly all other units.

Refining and chemicals earnings fell 39 per cent from a year ago, the company said.

TotalEnergies’ margin for refining crude into fuels dropped 21 per cent from a year ago to \$35.3 per ton, despite a slow recovery in the first half of 2025 from a collapse last year due to sagging demand and an increase in global competition.

The company said it expected refining margins to rise above \$50 per ton in the third quarter due to increased fuel demand during Europe’s summer driving season. (Reuters)

Rand steady but tariff concerns linger

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand was steady in early trade on Wednesday, with investor focus still pinned on tariff updates before Washington’s deadline.

At 0724 GMT, the rand traded at 17.88 against the dollar, barely changed from Tuesday’s close.

“The rand is trading below the R17.90 level this morning as it continues to recover from Monday’s tariff-driven blowout and strong dollar,” said Andre Cilliers, currency strategist at TreasuryONE.

This week’s major focus for the country is whether it can negotiate a better trade pact as it faces a 30 per cent duty on goods exported to the U.S., the highest rate among Sub-Saharan African countries.

The dollar last traded flat against a basket of currencies as investors held back from making big bets ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision on appointments to the Federal Reserve.

Trump on Tuesday said he would soon



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

announce a short-term replacement for Fed Governor Adriana Kugler, who announced her resignation on Friday, as well as his pick for the next Fed chair.

“The USD is losing its exceptionalism and is steadily finding itself on the defensive, allowing other currencies to make up lost

ground,” said ETM Analytics in a research note.

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange’s Top-40 index was up 0.6 per cent. South Africa’s benchmark 2035 government bond was weaker in early deals, as the yield rose 3 basis points to 9.705 per cent. (Reuters)

Google says hackers stole its customers' info by breaching its Salesforce database

GOOGLE has confirmed that some customers' information has been stolen in a recent breach of one of its databases.

In a blog post late on Tuesday, Google's Threat Intelligence Group said one of its Salesforce database systems, used to store contact information and related notes for small and medium businesses, was breached by a hacking group popularly known as ShinyHunters, formally designated as UNC6040. "The data retrieved by the threat actor was confined to basic and largely publicly available business information, such as business names and contact details," the company said.

Google did not disclose how many customers are affected, and a company spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It's not clear if the company has received any communication, such as a ransom demand.

ShinyHunters is known for targeting big companies and their cloud-based databases.

This is the latest in a series of breaches targeting Salesforce cloud systems, after recent thefts of customer data from Cisco and airline giant Qantas, retail giant Pandora, among others, as reported by Bleeping Computer. According to Google's blog post, the ShinyHunters group relies on voice phishing techniques to trick company employees into granting them access to their cloud-based Salesforce databases.

Google said the ShinyHunters group is likely preparing a data leak site, which some ransomware gangs use to publish stolen data to extort their corporate victims into paying a ransom. The group is said to have overlaps with other groups, including The Com, a known collective of cybercriminals who use hacking, extortion and sometimes threats of violence to break into networks.

(TechCrunch)



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Two arrested for smuggling AI chips to China; Nvidia says no to kill switches

THE U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) said on Tuesday that two Chinese nationals have been arrested for their alleged involvement in illegally shipping "tens of millions of dollars" worth of high-performance AI chips to China.

The DOJ said Chuan Geng and Shiwei Yang were arrested in California on August 2 and charged with violating the Export Control Reform Act, a felony that carries a statutory penalty of a maximum of 20 years in prison.

Geng and Yang are accused of knowing and willfully shipping "sensitive technologies," including GPUs, to China from the U.S. through their California-based company, ALX Solutions.

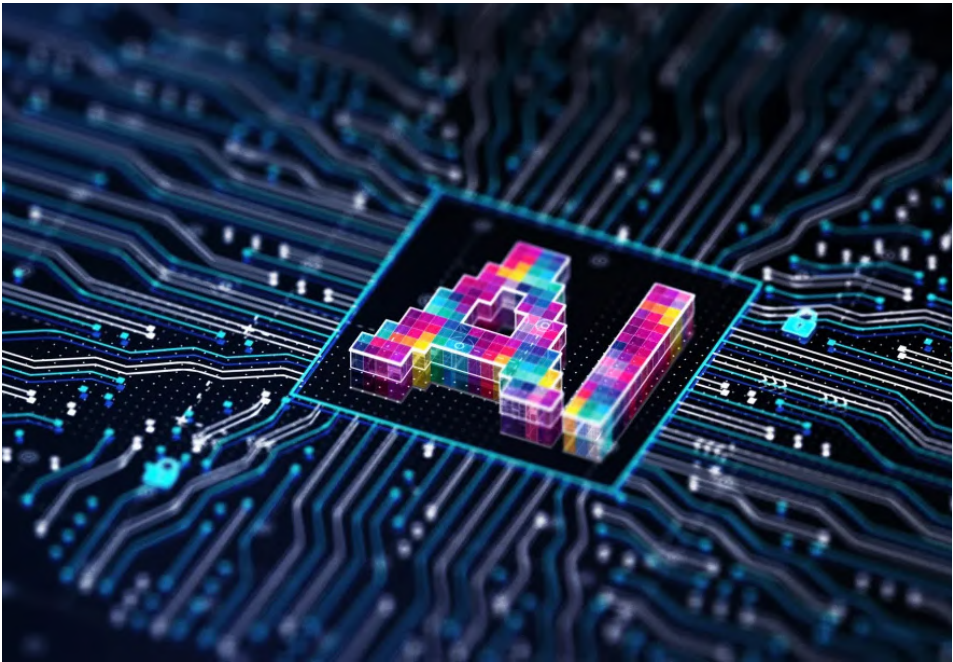
The DoJ did not name the company whose chips ALX Solutions was allegedly smuggling, but quoting a complaint, it said the chip is "the most powerful chip in the market" and is "designed specifically for AI applications." That description makes it likely that the chips being smuggled were made by Nvidia. A report by Reuters specifically named Nvidia's H100 GPUs as

the chips being shipped.

A review of export documents by the DOJ found that ALX Solutions sent chips and other tech to shipping and freight-forwarding companies in Singapore and Malaysia, but received payments from entities in Hong Kong and China in return. The department also found records of communication regarding shipping the tech to Malaysia to specifically go around U.S. export restrictions.

"This case demonstrates that smuggling is a nonstarter," an Nvidia spokesperson said in a statement. "We primarily sell our products to well-known partners, including OEMs, who help us ensure that all sales comply with U.S. export control rules. Even relatively small exporters and shipments are subject to thorough review and scrutiny, and any diverted products would have no service, support, or updates."

The news comes as the U.S. tries to figure out how to strike a balance between fostering global AI innovation and imposing export restrictions to China, which many in the West perceive to be a major threat in the AI race. (TechCrunch)



▲ The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) said on Tuesday that two Chinese nationals have been arrested for their alleged involvement in illegally shipping "tens of millions of dollars" worth of high-performance AI chips to China.



▲ The company said in a blog post that gpt-oss-20b is "tool-savvy and lightweight."

Microsoft brings OpenAI's smallest open model to Windows users

MICROSOFT is making OpenAI's new free and open GPT model, gpt-oss-20b, available to Windows 11 users via Windows AI Foundry, the tech giant's platform that lets users tap AI features, APIs, and popular open-source models on their computers.

The company said in a blog post that gpt-oss-20b is "tool-savvy and lightweight," adding: "Optimized for agentic tasks like code execution and tool use, it runs efficiently on a range of Windows hardware, with support for more devices coming soon. It's perfect for building autonomous assistants or embedding AI into real-world workflows, even in bandwidth-constrained environments."

Launched on Tuesday, OpenAI's gpt-oss-20b can run on consumer PCs and laptops with at least 16GB of VRAM, which a modern GPU from Nvidia or Radeon would have.

OpenAI said the model was trained using high-compute reinforcement learning, which helps it excel at powering AI agents and call tools, such as web search or Python code execution, as part of its chain-of-thought process.

However, the model is text-only, meaning it will not be able to process or generate images and audio like the company's other models.

Also, the model has a habit of hallucinating a lot: gpt-oss-20b hallucinated in response to 53% of questions on PersonQA, OpenAI's in-house benchmark for measuring the accuracy of a model's knowledge about people. Microsoft says it will bring the model to macOS soon, as well as other devices, though the company did not name any more. Microsoft is also making both gpt-oss-20b and older model gpt-oss-120b available via its hosted Azure AI Foundry platform. (TechCrunch)



▲ The scheme refuted these claims after Private Housing Student Association (PHSA), which represents private landlords, claimed that this money is owed from January 2024 to July 2025.

NSFAS denies owing R62m in unpaid student housing fees

THE National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has denied that it owes R62-million in unpaid accommodation fees.

The scheme refuted these claims after Private Housing Student Association (PHSA), which represents private landlords, claimed that this money is owed from January 2024 to July 2025.

Kagisho Mamabolo, PHSA CEO, said landlords in private accommodation are at financial risk due to the late payments made by NSFAS. Especially those who account for the majority of available beds.

“Thousands of students continue to face uncertainty due to delayed NSFAS accommodation payments and the absence of a sustainable student housing funding model,” said Mamabolo.

He said that the housing sector was challenged when it comes to affordability and quality gaps. The capped NSFAS allowances

needed to be discussed, he added.

He said the sector will not be able to offer affordable, decent, and legal housing unless serious changes are made soon.

The association’s Mmabatho Sebake told Sunday World that they are still engaging with NSFAS to address the issues. She said they have built a constructive and respectful working relationship.

“As an association, we remain steadfast in our commitment to placing the well-being and safety of students at the heart of all our efforts. Their welfare is not merely a priority for us. It is the guiding principle that shapes our advocacy, decision making, and collaborative engagement,” said Sebake.

In response, NSFAS denied the alleged debt from January 2024 to July 2025.

NSFAS released a statement highlighting that they do not pay the association but landlords directly. It also said the PHSA has not provided a full breakdown of the alleged

outstanding claims.

NSFAS explained that it only processes payments for claims that have passed all verification steps.

They emphasised that delays in payment may happen when students are not funded. Or when their registration data is missing, or institutions have not confirmed the claims.

According to the statement, NSFAS paid over R744-million to landlords in April 2025 to help reduce arrears. It also denied that it has run out of money, saying that all payments depend on valid and confirmed claims. The organisation claimed to be working with institutions to prevent problems like student evictions.

It also confirmed that it is reviewing the role of third-party middlemen in the payment process. And it promised to improve transparency and efficiency.

(Sunday World)

Gunmen abduct 60 in Nigeria, kill villagers in overnight raids

GUNMEN abducted at least 45 women and children in an overnight raid on five villages in northwest Nigeria, witnesses said, in the second mass kidnapping in the area within days.

The attackers returned to Sabongarin Damri on Monday and raided nearby villages including Sade, Tungar Tsalle, Tungar Sodangi and Tungar Musa Dogo, in an assault that lasted until dawn, Shehu Musa, the traditional head of Damri, told Reuters by phone late on Tuesday.

The incident followed a separate mass abduction in Sabongarin Damri, in Zamfara state, on Saturday in which 70 people were taken.

“The attackers invaded the communities and kidnapped no fewer than 45 people from the five neighbouring villages, which are less than half a kilometre apart,” Musa said.

Armed groups, often referred to locally as “bandits”, have killed hundreds and abducted thousands across Nigeria’s northwest in recent years. They typically hold captives for extended periods, demanding ransoms for their release.

Security forces engaged the assailants during Monday’s attack, killing three, but were unable to stop the bandits from fleeing with hostages and rustling cattle. Civilian casualties were reported, though the number of fatalities was unconfirmed.

“They mostly kidnapped women and children after killing some of our people,” said Hassan Dauda, a resident of Tungar Tsalle. “As I’m speaking to you now, some residents have started fleeing their community due to fear.”

Separately, Boko Haram militias attacked the remote Kennari village, in the Damasak area of the northeastern Borno state, on Monday, abducting at least 15 people and killing one person, according to a security report seen by Reuters.

Modu Bukar, a resident, said the assailants killed the village head and demanded a 30 million naira (\$19,650) ransom for the release of the captives. (Reuters)

Gauteng portfolio committee wants accountability after suspensions of HOD, CFO

THE Gauteng provincial legislature’s portfolio committee on community safety has welcomed the suspension of two high-ranking officials following the outcomes of a forensic audit.

On Tuesday, Premier Panyaza Lesufi suspended Mduduzi Malope, the chief financial officer (CFO), and Nontsikelelo Sisulu, the head of the department (HOD) of community safety.

They were suspended following the outcome of a probe conducted by the provincial forensic audit unit in Lesufi’s office, which uncovered serious financial irregularities within the department.

Dr Bandile Masuku, the committee’s chairperson, praised Lesufi’s disciplinary actions.

“As the oversight body for the department of community safety, the committee views this development with serious concern, particularly as both the head of the department and the chief financial officer regularly appear before the committee

to present reports on the department’s financial performance.

“No indications of such irregularities were evident during these engagements, which raises important questions about the effectiveness of current oversight mechanisms,” said Masuku.

Review of oversight model recommended
Additionally, the committee has called on the legislature to strengthen and review its sector oversight model in order to ensure that departmental financial performance is monitored more closely.

“This includes ensuring that committees implement more robust accountability measures and intensify efforts to detect and prevent financial mismanagement.

“The committee strongly condemns any acts of corruption or financial misconduct within public institutions, especially within a department whose core mandate is to safeguard the lives and wellbeing of the people of Gauteng.

“Those entrusted with positions of



▲ Dr Bandile Masuku has praised Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi’s disciplinary actions.

authority must uphold the highest standards of integrity and service,” said Masuku.

Crezane Bosch, the DA’s member of the provincial legislature responsible for

community safety, expressed her party’s dismay regarding the delayed suspension of Sisulu and Malope. (Sunday World)

Musk vs. Modi: Inside the battle over India's internet censorship

IN January, an old post on Elon Musk's social media platform, X, became a concern for police in the Indian city of Satara. Written in 2023, the short message from an account with a few hundred followers described a senior ruling-party politician as "useless".

"This post and content are likely to create serious communal tension," inspector Jitendra Shahane wrote in a content-removal notice marked "CONFIDENTIAL" and addressed to X.

The post, which remains online, is among hundreds cited by X in a lawsuit it filed in March against India's government, challenging a sweeping crackdown on social media content by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration.

Since 2023, India has ramped up efforts to police the internet by allowing many more officials to file takedown orders and to submit them directly to tech firms through a government website launched in October.

X argues India's actions are illegal and unconstitutional, and that they trample free speech by empowering scores of government agencies and thousands of police to suppress legitimate criticism of public officials.

India contends in court documents that its approach tackles a proliferation of unlawful content and ensures accountability online. It says many tech companies, including Meta and Alphabet's Google, support its actions. Both companies declined to comment for this story.

Musk, who calls himself a free-speech absolutist, has clashed with authorities



▲ India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Elon Musk in Washington, D.C., U.S.

in the United States, Brazil, Australia and elsewhere over compliance and takedown demands. But as regulators globally weigh free-speech protections against concerns about harmful content, Musk's case against Modi's government in the Karnataka High Court targets the entire basis for tightened internet censorship in India, one of X's biggest user bases. Musk said in 2023 that the South Asian nation had "more promise

than any large country in the world" and that Modi had pushed him to invest there.

This account of the behind-the-scenes battle between the world's richest person and authorities in the world's most populous country is based on a Reuters review of 2,500 pages of non-public legal filings and interviews with seven police officers involved in content-removal requests. It reveals the workings of a takedown system

shrouded in secrecy, some Indian officials' ire over "illegal" material on X, and the broad spectrum of content that police and other agencies have sought to censor.

While the takedown orders include many that sought to counter misinformation, they also encompass directives by Modi's administration to remove news about a deadly stampede, and demands from state police to scrub cartoons that depicted the prime minister in an unfavourable light or mocked local politicians, the filings show.

X didn't respond to Reuters questions about the case, while India's IT ministry declined to comment because the matter was before the court. Modi's office and his home ministry didn't respond to questions.

There have been no immediate signs of souring personal relations between Musk and Modi, who have enjoyed a warm public rapport. But the showdown comes as the South African-born entrepreneur, whose business empire includes EV maker Tesla and satellite internet provider Starlink, gears up to expand both ventures in India.

Even supporters of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have faced scrutiny of their online musings from police officials newly empowered by the IT ministry to target social media activity.

Koustav Bagchi, a lawyer and BJP member, posted an image on X in March that depicted a rival, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, in an astronaut suit. State police issued a takedown notice, citing "risks to public safety and national security".

(Reuters)

Terrible thirst hits Gaza with polluted aquifers and broken pipelines

WEAKENED by hunger, many Gazans trek across a ruined landscape each day to haul all their drinking and washing water - a painful load that is still far below the levels needed to keep people healthy.

Even as global attention has turned to starvation in Gaza, where after 22 months of a devastating Israeli military campaign a global hunger monitor says a famine scenario is unfolding, the water crisis is just as severe according to aid groups.

Though some water comes from small desalination units run by aid agencies, most is drawn from wells in a brackish aquifer that has been further polluted by sewage and chemicals seeping through the rubble, spreading diarrhoea and hepatitis.

COGAT, the Israeli military agency responsible for coordinating aid in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, says it operates two water pipelines into the Gaza Strip providing millions of litres of water a day.

Palestinian water officials say these have not been working recently.

Israel stopped all water and electricity supply to Gaza early in the war but resumed some supply later



▲ A Palestinian child waits with containers to collect water amid shortages, in Gaza City.

though the pipeline network in the territory has been badly damaged.

Most water and sanitation infrastructure has been destroyed and pumps from the aquifer often rely on electricity from small generators - for which fuel is rarely available. COGAT said the Israeli military has allowed coordination with aid organisations to bring in equipment to maintain water infrastructure throughout the conflict.

Moaz Mukhaimar, aged 23 and a university student before the war, said he has to walk about a kilometre, queuing for two hours, to

fetch water. He often goes three times a day, dragging it back to the family tent over bumpy ground on a small metal handcart.

"How long will we have to stay like this?" he asked, pulling two larger canisters of very brackish water to use for cleaning and two smaller ones of cleaner water to drink.

His mother, Umm Moaz, 53, said the water he collects is needed for the extended family of 20 people living in their small group of tents in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

(Reuters)

Russia says Putin and Witkoff hold 'useful' talks

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff held "useful and constructive" talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday, a Kremlin aide said, two days before the expiry of a deadline set by President Donald Trump for Russia to agree to peace in Ukraine or face new sanctions.

Witkoff met Putin for around three hours on a last-minute mission to seek a breakthrough in the 3-1/2-year war that began with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov said the two sides had exchanged "signals" on the Ukraine issue and discussed the

possibility of developing strategic cooperation between Moscow and Washington, but declined to give more details until Witkoff had reported back to Trump.

Russian investment envoy Kirill Dmitriev, who earlier greeted Witkoff on arrival and strolled with him in a park near the Kremlin, posted on social media: "Dialogue will prevail."

There was no immediate comment from the U.S. side.

Trump, increasingly frustrated with Putin over the lack of progress towards peace, has threatened to impose heavy tariffs on countries that buy Russian exports.

(Reuters)



▲ U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff held "useful and constructive" talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Young Zesh to host epic birthday bash at 23:28 Lounge

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI music star Young Zesh is gearing up for a spectacular birthday celebration at the 23:28 Lounge in Mbabane.

Scheduled for August 9, 2025, this event is set to be a memorable occasion for both the artist and his fans. The festivities will kick off at 3 pm, with the excitement building as the afternoon progresses. For those planning to join the celebration later in the evening, entry will cost E50 after 6 pm. Attendees can look forward to an electrifying lineup of performances featuring popular artists such as Ayacity and Obsession, alongside the Lounge's talented Resident DJs. With a mix of genres including Amapiano and Hip Hop, the dance floor is set to be alive with the latest hits and party anthems.

In a recent interview, Young Zesh expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming event, emphasising the significance of celebrating his birthday in style. "First and foremost, this is a birthday celebration. I'm using the moment to enjoy life and mark another year with a powerful, fun-filled party. I want to connect with fans and supporters. By hosting the event publicly, I'm giving my fans a chance to celebrate with me, strengthening my bond with them in a festive and personal way," he shared.

The artist's desire to foster a connection with his audience is evident in his approach to this celebration. Young Zesh recognises the importance of engaging with his supporters, and this birthday party serves as a platform to do just that. "This event is



▲ Young Zesh.

not just about me; it's about all of us coming together to celebrate life and music. I want everyone to feel included and have a great time," he added.

In addition to celebrating his birthday, Young Zesh sees this event as an opportunity

to further grow his brand and visibility within the music industry. "Expect fire sets from Ayacity, Obsession, and top Resident DJs who will keep the dancefloor alive with the latest hits, Amapiano, Hip Hop, and party bangers all night long," he promised.

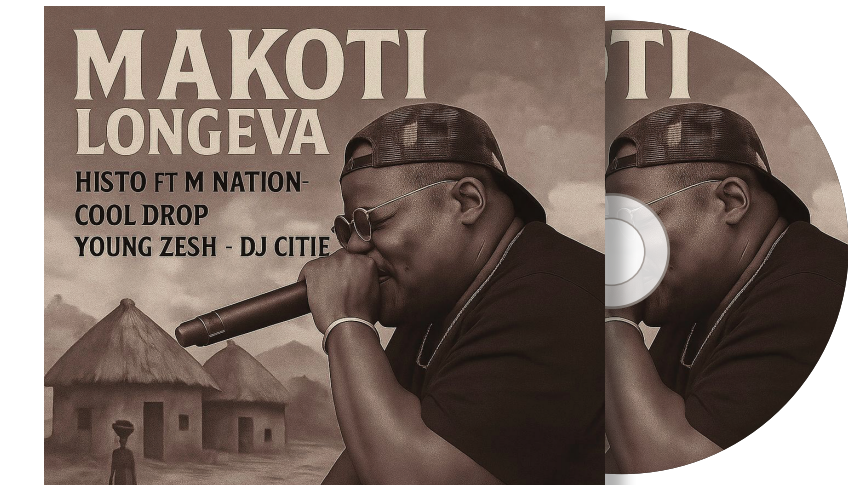
Histo's 'Makoti Longeva' hits 30 000 views

ESWATINI'S music scene is witnessing a powerful new single from talented musician Histo, titled 'Makoti Longeva,' which has since reached over 33,000 views in a few days.

The song resonates with listeners on multiple levels, exploring the complexities of marriage and cultural expectations in contemporary society. The track features contributions from fellow artists M Nation, Young Zesh, and DJ Citie.

In an exclusive interview, Histo shared the inspiration behind 'Makoti Longeva,' stating, "This song is a composition that emerged from my reflections on the changes we're seeing in today's generation, especially regarding marriage." He emphasised that the song is not drawn from personal experiences but rather from observations within his community and the stories he encounters.

"I imagined a situation where a man marries a woman, thinking she will be a pillar of the home, only to find that she struggles to adjust to the family's values," he explained. The song carries a profound cultural and emotional message that speaks directly to the heart of Eswatini's traditions. Histo elaborated, "In our African tradition, especially here in Eswatini, a wife is seen not only as a partner to her husband but also as someone who joins and respects



the entire family." He pointed out the expectations placed on wives to embody dignity, humility, and maturity within the family structure. 'Makoti Longeva' aims to highlight the consequences of a shift in priorities, where some women may overlook their responsibilities at home, treating elders with disrespect and prioritising social outings over family obligations.

Respect

"It's a reminder that respect for culture, for elders, and the family structure is still important," he asserted. The creative process behind 'Makoti Longeva' was one of intentionality and collaboration. Histo

had a clear storyline in mind, which allowed the lyrics to flow naturally. "I wanted the lyrics to feel like a conversation, something people could relate to and talk about," he said. Partnering with artists like M Nation, Young Zesh, and DJ Citie was a strategic decision to enhance the song's emotional depth. Musically, 'Makoti Longeva' blends Afro-pop with cultural elements and storytelling, creating a sound that is both traditional and modern. DJ Citie's production of the beat has been pivotal in bringing Histo's vision to life, establishing a rhythm and mood that complement the song's message.



▲ Author of 'Redefine Your Worth' Pastor Stanley Mkhwanazi.

'Redefine Your Worth' nominated for Book Award

PASTOR Stanley Mkhwanazi is celebrating a significant achievement with the nomination of his book, 'Redefine Your Worth,' for the African Christian Authors Book Award in the 'Mental Health' category.

This recognition underscores the book's impactful message of hope and healing, resonating with readers throughout Africa. Released in April, 'Redefine Your Worth' tackles mental health issues from a spiritual and biblical perspective, drawing heavily from Pastor Mkhwanazi's personal experiences. Having faced severe depression and suicidal thoughts between 2017 and 2020, he found a divine calling to "preach, pray, and love."

He emphasises the often-overlooked aspect of mental health within the Christian community, noting, "I was already a pastor when I battled depression. For me, mental health was being overlooked in the Christian world. Before someone goes to a mental health practitioner, they will start at the church." The book was inspired by a deep desire to support those grappling with feelings of worthlessness and despair. Pastor Stanley articulates, "If you've ever felt stuck, unworthy, or broken, this is for you. I am there with you in your isolation. I take you through lessons and a 'worth pillars' strategy to get out of that and see yourself as someone of great worth, hopeful and wanting to live again."

Continent

The African Christian Authors Book Awards, organised annually by CLC Kenya, aim to celebrate high-quality Christian authorship across the continent. Pastor Stanley views the awards as an opportunity for growth as an author, stating, "It's more of an opportunity for development as an author." He highlights that while there are no financial rewards, the recognition facilitates training and networking opportunities with fellow African Christian writers.

The awards ceremony is set for November 2025, with winners determined by a panel of judges, rather than through public voting. Pastor Stanley's nomination in the Mental Health category reflects the increasing recognition of the importance of mental wellness within faith communities. Reflecting on this milestone, Pastor Stanley shares, "This milestone is more than just recognition. It is an opportunity for the message of hope to reach even more hearts across Africa. Thank you for every prayer, purchase, and word of encouragement along this journey. Let's keep sharing God's unfailing love with those who need it most!"

Oncemore Six to ignite youth at Revival Crusade in Mbabane

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

RENOWNED South African gospel musician Oncemore Six is set to headline the upcoming Youth Revival Crusade & Gathering, hosted by Schools Mission.

This highly anticipated event will occur from August 7 to 9, 2025, at the Prince of Wales Stadium in Mbabane, Eswatini. The gathering is expected to be a spiritual upliftment for the youth, featuring an impressive lineup of artists, including Bhelekazi, Victoria Orenze, Solomon Zikalala, and Frans Mkhali, among others.

The announcement was made via the Schools Mission's social media platforms, where they expressed their excitement about partnering with the Mbabane Municipality for this significant event. "Family, we are happy to announce that for this gathering we have partnered with the Mbabane Municipality. We thank God and give Him all the praise for such an opportunity.

We are looking forward to a great weekend in Eswatini's beautiful capital city, Mbabane," the post read. The Youth Revival Crusade is designed not only as a musical event but also as a spiritual gathering aimed at empowering the youth of Eswatini. With entry to the event being complimentary return transport provided, the organisers have made it accessible to everyone, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder participation. This initiative reflects the Schools Mission's commitment to fostering a sense of community and spiritual growth among the youth. The event will feature a variety of activities, including worship sessions, motivational talks, and community



▲ Oncemore Six.

outreach programs.

The goal is to inspire young people to embrace their faith and engage positively with their communities. The presence of well-known gospel artists is expected to draw large crowds, creating an atmosphere of worship and celebration.

Oncemore Six, born and raised in South Africa, has made a significant impact in the

gospel music scene with his powerful vocals and heartfelt worship leading. His journey in music began at a young age, heavily influenced by his mother's musicality and his upbringing in the church. Over the years, he has risen to prominence through his dedication to worship and has released several impactful songs, including 'Ngeke Ng'suke Kuwe' and 'Here on Our Knees.'

Itende Massive Show phase 1 tickets now available

ITENDE Massive Show phase 1 tickets are now officially on sale.

This highly anticipated event set for November 28, 2025, will deliver an unforgettable experience filled with live performances from a diverse array of artists, showcasing the rich tapestry of gospel music. In a recent announcement, the Itende Worship Experience team declared, "The wait is over! Phase 1 tickets are officially Live. Is E50 too much for you? Well, no! Get your seat today with the first phase tickets."

The first phase of tickets is priced at an affordable E50, making it accessible for a wide audience. For those looking to enjoy the event later, Phase 2 tickets are available for E80, while door tickets will cost E100. This tiered pricing structure ensures that everyone can participate in this unique worship experience.

The Itende Worship Experience is more than just a concert; it is a gospel movement dedicated to nurturing and showcasing local talent. The initiative aims to groom Swati artists, providing them with a platform to shine and reach broader audiences. By focusing on local talent, the movement



▲ Last year's Itende Massive Show.

seeks to highlight the richness of Eswatini's cultural heritage while promoting the gospel message.

The event will feature 20 artists performing live in a single night, creating an electrifying atmosphere filled with praise and worship. Attendees can expect a fully packed lineup that blends local and South African gospel talent, promising exhilarating performances that resonate with the audience. The mission of the Itende

Worship Experience extends beyond the borders of Eswatini. The movement aims to spread the power of Itende worship and praise to nations far and wide, fostering a sense of community and shared faith among diverse cultures. For those eager to secure their spot at this monumental event, tickets are readily available through a simple process. Interested attendees can purchase their tickets by contacting +268 76843826.



▲ Obsession.

Obsession takes 3-Step Night to Mdzimba View

OBSSESSION is set to take the stage for an electrifying event that promises to be a highlight for music lovers and partygoers alike.

The highly anticipated 3 Step Night with Obsession is scheduled for August 7, 2025, at Mdzimba View Shisanyama, coinciding with the popular 'Ladies Night Thursday.' This vibrant gathering will not only feature Obsession but will also be headlined by renowned DJ Ayany, ensuring a night filled with pulsating beats and unforgettable performances.

The lineup for the evening is impressive, boasting a variety of supporting acts that include local favourites such as Baba, MaWillies, Sbuda, Castle, MaTen Ten, and Slim Deep. With an entry fee free, the event is designed to be both accessible and exhilarating, catering to a wide audience eager for an unforgettable night of entertainment.

The inaugural edition of 3 Step Night took place on August 2, 2025, at the trendy Espinho Restaurant & Bar, which has quickly become a hotspot for nightlife in the region. This first event set the stage for what attendees can expect moving forward, with Obsession expressing his enthusiasm for the concept and its potential reach.

Interview

In an exclusive interview, Obsession shared insights into the inspiration behind the event. "This event is inspired by the fast-growing new wave of the 3 Step sound," he explained. The 3 Step genre, characterised by its infectious rhythms and danceable beats, has been gaining significant traction, particularly among the youth.

Obsession revealed that he was approached by DJ Mfundo Kool Swazi, the manager of Espinho Entertainment, to collaborate on the Espinho show. "The concept, A Night of 3 Step with Obsession, is still going to other venues, but we decided to start at Espinho, one of the hottest hangout spots currently on the land," he noted.

Obsession is eager to showcase the unique Afrohouse and 3 Step sounds that have captivated audiences across the region. "People can come to have an exclusive experience of Afrohouse and 3 Step sounds. It's going to be a night of fun," he emphasised.

‘DJ Sumbody murder accused Katiso Molefe involved in drug trade’

KATISO Molefe, the businessman and alleged mastermind of the murder of music producer and club owner Oupa John Sefoka, also known as DJ Sumbody, is actively involved in the illicit trade of drugs.

Molefe’s involvement in the illicit drug trade is supported by evidence from his bank statements showing unidentified sources of income.

This information was revealed by the state on Wednesday during the formal bail application of Molefe, 61, at the Alexandra Magistrate’s Court. The state is opposing Molefe’s bail application.

Molefe and three alleged hitmen, Michael Pule Tau, 55, Musa Kekana, 35, and Tiego Floyd Mabusela, 47, have been charged in relation to the murders of DJ Sumbody and his two bodyguards, Sibusiso Mokoena and Sandile Myeza.

The four men are facing charges of three counts of murder, two counts of unlawful possession of a firearm, and one count of unlawful possession of ammunition in connection with the murders of DJ Sumbody, Mokoena and Myeza in November 2022.

DJ Sumbody, Mokoena, and Myeza were shot and killed by

unknown men while travelling in their cars. This happened on November 20 2022 on the corner of Woodmead and Woodland drives in Sandton, Johannesburg.

During court proceedings on Wednesday, Molefe appeared in leg chains to bring his bail application.

Molefe’s lawyer, Adv Michael Hellens SC, read Molefe’s bail affidavit in court.

Hellens said Molefe should be granted bail because he has not violated his bail conditions. This was with regards to bail he received in June this year on a separate matter.

He said Molefe was arrested in December 2024 at his Sandton, Johannesburg, home. The arrest was for the April 2024 murder of Vereeniging engineer Armand Swart. Hellens said Molefe was denied bail by the Vereeniging Magistrate’s Court in April this year.

However, on appealing the bail decision, Hellens said the Pretoria High Court, through now Acting Gauteng Judge President Aubrey Ledwaba, granted Molefe bail on June 27 2025.

Hellens said from the time of being released on bail in June this year until the time of his arrest on July 21 2025 for the murder of DJ Sumbody, Molefe never violated



▲ Businessman Katiso Molefe during his appearance at the Alexandra Magistrates Court on August 6 2025 for the murder of DJ Sumbody.

his bail conditions.

In reply, the state prosecutor said the Pretoria High Court decision is not relevant in this particular case.

The state prosecutor was reading the affidavit of the lead investigating officer in the case. The latter cannot be named because she is under 24-hour protection by the police task force.

In a bid to oppose Molefe’s bail, the investigating officer’s affidavit stated that Molefe is actively involved in illicit drug trade. And that he killed DJ Sumbody and his friend Hector “DJ Vintos” Buthelezi due to the illicit drug trade.

The prosecutor said Molefe’s bank statements showed that he has unidentified sources of income. He said Molefe’s bank state-

ments showed that he has made cash deposits whose purpose could not be identified.

“The applicant [Molefe] is a dangerous criminal with no regard for human life,” said the prosecutor.

After the presentation of the state’s case, Hellens asked magistrate Renier Boshoff to postpone the matter.

(Sunday World)

‘Married at First Sight Mzansi’ couple Dee, Khutso crumbles under financial strain

LITSOANELO Seturumane, commonly known as Dee, became a fan favourite in the inaugural season of Married at First Sight Mzansi because of her vibrant personality and candidness.

Matched with data analyst Khutso Mokoena, their relationship showed initial promise but soon faced significant hurdles.

In a revealing interview on the Engineer Your Life podcast, hosted by Lungelo KM, Dee shared insights into their marriage, particularly focusing on Khutso’s financial contribution, which she claimed was a mere R2 000.

From the outset, Dee and Khutso’s chemistry was undeniable, with romantic moments during their honeymoon suggesting a strong foundation.

However, as they settled into married life,

issues emerged, particularly around blending their families – Dee’s son, Zion, and Khutso’s daughter, Omphile – while also managing their finances. Dee, a law student and pastry chef, expressed frustration over what she perceived as an unequal partnership.

She stated on the podcast: “It was apparent from day two or day three that we were from different backgrounds, so we had to talk extensively just to find a middle ground.”

The financial imbalance became a focal point. Dee revealed that Khutso, while earning an income from his apartment through Airbnb, contributed only R2 000 to the couple’s shared household.

“You’re living in my house, and all you’re giving is R2 000? That’s not a partnership,” she remarked, emphasising her disappointment. (Sunday World)



▲ Litsoanelo Seturumane, commonly known as Dee and Khutso Mokoena.

Ndlala Mall grand opening set to dazzle with Donell Jones

PRETORIA’S vibrant Arcadia district is gearing up for a spectacular event as Ndlala Mall prepares to host its grand opening on August 23, 2025, after a postponement from its initial August 2 date.

The star-studded celebration, headlined by international R&B sensation Donell Jones, promises to be an unforgettable experience at the state-of-the-art Ndlala Arena, a 550-seater venue within the mall precinct.

Thami Ndlala, the visionary CEO behind Ndlala Mall, expressed his excitement about securing Donell Jones as the main act.

Known for his chart-topping 1999 album Where I Wanna Be and the hit single “U Know What’s Up” featuring Lisa Lopes, Jones has solidified his place in R&B history with a platinum-certified album and a peak at number seven on the Billboard Hot 100.

With 1.2-million monthly Spotify listeners, his soulful melodies are set to captivate the audience.

“It is an honour to have an artist of such great calibre



▲ The Ndlala Mall, a reimagined transformation of the former Sterland Mall, stands as a modern mixed-use retail and lifestyle hub in Pretoria.

in the music industry as the main performer at the opening,” Ndlala said.

Joining Jones on stage are South Africa’s own musical powerhouses, Zonke Dikana and Vusi Nova.

Zonke, a multi-platinum, award-winning singer,

songwriter, and producer, has penned hits for artists like Winnie Khumalo, Thebe, and Bongo Maffin.

These accolades have cemented her status as a cornerstone of South African R&B.

(Sunday World)

Warning signs of kidney problems

You're Always Tired

KIDNEYS filter waste from your blood and ship it out in your pee.

When your kidneys don't work right, toxins can build up. One common tipoff is fatigue. You may feel spent, weak, or have trouble concentrating. Kidneys make a hormone that tells your body to create red blood cells. If you have fewer of them, your blood can't deliver as much oxygen to your muscles and brain as they need.

Poor Sleep

Studies show a possible link between sleep apnea and chronic kidney disease (CKD), which over time damages your organs and may lead to kidney failure. Sleep apnea may hurt your kidneys in part by preventing your body from getting enough oxygen. CKD in turn may cause sleep apnea by narrowing your throat, toxin buildup, and other ways.

Itchy Skin

This may happen if your kidneys can't flush out toxins and they build up in your blood. That can cause a rash or make you itch all over. Over time, your kidneys may not be able to balance the minerals and nutrients in your body. This can lead to mineral and bone disease, which can make your skin dry and itchy.

Swollen Face and Feet

When your kidneys can't get rid of sodium well, fluids build up in your body. That may lead to puffy hands, feet, ankles, legs, or a puffy face. You might notice swelling especially in your feet and ankles. And protein leaking out in your urine can show up as puffiness around your eyes.

Muscle Cramps

Cramps in your legs and elsewhere can be a sign of poor kidney function. Imbalance in the levels of sodium, calcium, potassium, or other electrolytes can interrupt how your muscles and nerves work.

Breathlessness

When you have kidney disease, your organs don't make enough of a hormone called erythropoietin. The hormones signal your body to make red blood cells. Without it, you can get anemia and feel short of breath. Another cause is fluid buildup.



You might have a hard time catching your breath. In serious cases, lying down may make you feel like you're drowning.

Foggy Head

When your kidneys don't filter all waste out of your body, the toxins can affect your brain. Anemia also may block your brain from the oxygen it needs. You may feel dizzy and have trouble with concentration and memory. You may even become so confused that you have trouble with simple

tasks.

Low Appetite

Kidney disease can cause nausea or vomiting and upset your stomach. That may leave you with little craving for food. That sometimes may lead to weight loss.

Foul Breath

When your kidneys can't filter out waste, it can cause a condition called uremia. That

can make your mouth smell. Also, toxins in your bloodstream can give food a metallic or off taste.

Foamy, Brown, or Bloody Urine

Bubbly pee could be a sign of too much protein called albumin. That can result from kidney issues. So can brownish or very pale urine. Faulty kidney function also may let blood leak into your bladder. Blood in your urine also can be caused by kidney stones, tumors, or an infection. **WebMD**

How It Works

WALKING may be the simplest way to work out.

You can do it almost anywhere, and it's a snap to get started: Just put one foot in front of the other.

There are many great reasons to walk. Your heart will get stronger, you'll lower your blood pressure, and your bones will get stronger. Walking also eases stress, helps you sleep better, and can boost your outlook on life.

Walk at a brisk pace for 30 minutes or more on most days. Do it alone or with a friend. Try a walking club or recruit your family for an after-dinner walk. All you need is a pair of walking shoes.

Intensity Level: Low

You can match your pace to your fitness level. For a more intense workout, try walking faster, longer, or uphill.

Areas It Targets

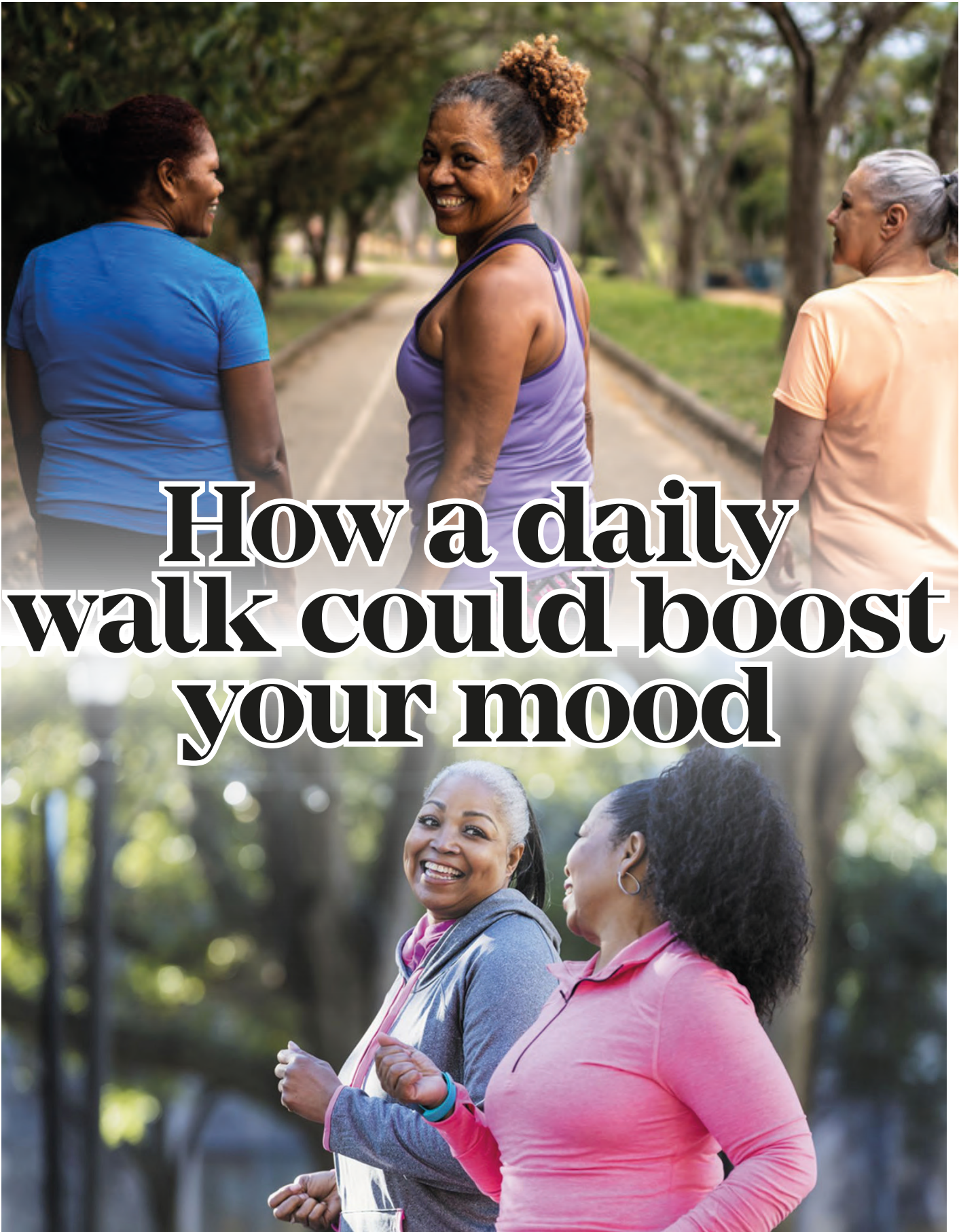
- **Core:** No. Walking doesn't specifically target your core.
- **Arms:** No. This workout doesn't target your arms.
- **Legs:** Yes. Walking works the major muscles in your legs.
- **Glutes:** Yes. Walking uphill is great for your glutes.
- **Back:** No. This workout doesn't focus on your back muscles.

Type

- **Flexibility:** No. This workout is not focused on improving flexibility.
- **Aerobic:** Yes. Keep up a brisk pace to make it a good cardio workout.
- **Strength:** Yes. Your legs will get stronger from walking regularly.
- **Sport:** No. Race-walking is a sport, and you can often find charity walks to do with a group of people, but for most people, walking is not competitive.
- **Low-Impact:** Yes. Walking won't jar your joints.

What Else Should I Know?

- **Cost:** Free.
- **Good for beginners?** Yes. Walking is an ideal type of exercise when you're just getting started. You can go as fast or as slow as you need. It's easy to bump up your pace and go longer distances as you get better.
- **Outdoors:** Yes. You can walk around your neighborhood, on a school track, or through a nature trail. If the weather is bad, try walking in a mall.
- **At home:** Yes. You can walk anywhere. If you have a treadmill, you can even walk indoors.
- **Equipment required?** None, except for your walking shoes. Opt for shoes that support your arch and slightly elevate your heel.



How a daily walk could boost your mood

What Dr. Melinda Ratini Says

No special equipment. No gym fees. You can shed pounds and lower your blood pressure and your cholesterol -- all in your own neighborhood, mall, park, or on your treadmill.

You can start slowly with just 5 or 10 minutes a day and work up to at least 30 minutes on most days of the week to get the full cardio benefits.

You should also do strength-building exercises at least twice a week. You might want to carry light weights or cans to help build up your upper body while you walk.

Whether you like to walk alone or in groups, you can build a walking program that you are sure to enjoy. If you're already in good shape, work up a sweat with a power walk. You can use it as your main workout,

or use it along with another program to mix things up and avoid boredom.

If you walk outside, walk in safe areas, stay cool, drink water, and wear sunscreen!

Is It Good for Me If I Have a Health Condition?

Walking is the perfect exercise for many people.

If you have diabetes, walking can help lower your blood sugar and your weight. Take care if you have diabetes-related nerve damage. Your doctor or foot doctor can tell you if walking is your best exercise choice and, if so, what type of shoe is best.

Walking can help protect against heart disease. It can lower your blood pressure and your "bad" (LDL) cholesterol while ramping up your "good" (HDL) cholesterol.

If you already have heart disease, your doctor may suggest starting your walking program in a cardiac rehab setting. The rehab staff will monitor your heart and blood pressure as you build stamina.

Knee, hip, and back problems may put a cramp in your walking plans. Ask your doctor or physical therapist for advice before lacing up your walking shoes. Other problems that might hinder walking include balance issues, muscle weakness, and other physical disabilities.

Walking is also a great way to get fit and stay healthy if you are pregnant. As long as you have been active before the pregnancy and are not having any medical problems, then you should be good to go. To prevent falls, avoid uneven ground as your belly grows and your center of gravity shifts.

WebMD



Interest Rate

6.75%

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

What does this mean?

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

Inflation

2.9%

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

What to expect?

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

Economic Activity

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

Monetary Policy Statement

1 August 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Phil Mnisi
GOVERNOR



Nabi awaits confirmation if Sundowns striker will join team

KAIZER Chiefs coach Nasreddine Nabi is waiting for the club to confirm whether he will get one of his top targets, Etiosa Ighodaro, or if they will go for a different striker.

Amakhosi have been active in the transfer market, making six signings so far, with the club also confirming that more players will be recruited to bolster Nabi's squad.

The striking department is one of the positions Amakhosi wants to reinforce following their struggles in front of goal last season. Chiefs have since been heavily linked with the Nigerian international Ighodaro, who is currently contracted to Mamelodi Sundowns.

The big, lanky striker was recently on loan to AmaZulu FC last season and is expected to leave Sundowns, with coach Miguel Cardoso stressing that he wants to cut the size of his squad. Season opener against Stellenbosch FC Speaking to the media during the launch of the Betway Premiership in Sandton on

Tuesday, Nabi shed some light on Ighodaro, saying that he is a striker the club has been looking at but is waiting for management to confirm whether he will land the player.

"That player [Ighodaro] belongs to another team with administrative issues, but he or another striker that we listed on our transfer list will be welcomed," Nabi said.

"For now, we will wait to hear from our administration if he or another striker will join.

"I saw the player you are asking about, who was playing for AmaZulu last season, and I believe he is a good player; however, he does not belong to our club, so we can't say much about him."

Amakhosi's six signings include Ethan Chislett, Siphesihle Ndlovu, Nkanyiso Shinga, Flavio Silva, and former Orlando Pirates defensive duo Thabiso Monyane and Paseka Mako.

The Glamour Boys will kick off their league campaign against Stellenbosch FC at the Cape Town Stadium on Sunday evening. (Sunday World)



Springboks will be eager to make a statement in Rugby Championship

The Springboks will be looking to stamp their authority during the Rugby Championship and hammer home their status as the top team in world rugby and the side to beat heading towards the Rugby World Cup in Australia in 2027.

The Boks superbly backed up their 2023 World Cup triumph in France with a fantastic 2024, in which they won 11 out of 13 games, won the full (double round) Rugby Championship for the first time, and enjoyed an unbeaten end-of-year-tour to the UK.

Their two losses came in one-point thrillers, with Ireland needing a drop goal after the fulltime hooter to win in Durban, while a fringe side was edged by Los Pumas in Argentina.

With coach Rassie Erasmus and his management team continuing to evolve the Boks and strengthen their depth, they now have a great chance to make a big statement to the rest of the world in 2025 that they are seriously going for the three-peat in 2027.

It has been an underwhelming start to the season for the Boks, as they have yet to be seriously challenged, so they may be heading into the Rugby Championship a tad undercooked. They crushed a well-known but ageing invitational Barbarians side 54-7 in their opening match, before easily dispatching Italy 42-24 and 45-0, and then cruising to a 55-10 win over second-tier Georgia. With the opposition not the strongest, the Boks took the opportunity to give fringe players game time, tried out some combinations and mixed it up with some innovative plays during their four matches so far.

Wallabies up next

However, they now head into the meat of the season, and defending their Rugby Championship title will be at the top of their agenda.

Starting off at home against the Wallabies is probably the perfect way for them to build up a head of steam, heading into a huge two-game tour of New Zealand against the All Blacks. Australia are not the strongest opposition, but they look to be a much improved team from last year when the Boks dispatched them easily 33-7 and 30-12 Down Under.

They will also have plenty of momentum and motivation after an impressive showing against the British and Irish Lions, where despite losing the series 2-1, they were very unlucky to lose the second Test and won the admittedly dead rubber finale over the past weekend.

So they definitely can't be underestimated, but if the Boks can up their game from what they have produced so far this season, they should be able to comfortably deal with them on home turf. Rest of the season If they can start as expected, with two bonus-point wins against the Wallabies, that will set up their tour to New Zealand, where the Boks will be chasing a famous win over the All Blacks in Auckland, as well as in Wellington. The final two games of the Rugby Champs are against Argentina in Durban, and at Twickenham in England to close out the competition, and if they have sewn up the championship by then, they may use that game to shake things up a bit. **The Citizen**)

Stadium Management offers update on new FNB Stadium pitch

STADIUM Management South Africa CEO Bertie Grobbelaar has provided an update on the state of the FNB Stadium pitch, which has undergone a makeover during the off-season in order to host Betway Premiership matches.

The iconic 2010 FIFA World Cup venue serves as the home ground for Kaizer Chiefs, who kick off their 2025/26 Betway Premiership campaign away to Stellenbosch FC at Athlone Stadium on Sunday.

Following the trip to the Mother City to take on Stellies, Amakhosi are scheduled to return to FNB Stadium next Wednesday to host Polokwane City, followed by another home tie against Richards Bay six days later.

"A lifespan of a GrassMaster pitch is anything between 10, 12 to 15 years depending on the usage. We didn't run away last year, we got experts who advised us the FNB pitch is beyond its lifespan and that we have to replace it," Grobbelaar said to Thabiso Mosia on Radio 2000. "We couldn't do it mid-season and had to wait until the end of the season. It was a bad playing surface towards the

end of the season. They took out the pitch, did the work, maintenance and renovations.

"As I said to you, they are halfway with the stitching now, and the GrassMaster machine is on the pitch as we speak. So it's not about the point of not caring about it."

When pressed about whether the stadium will be ready to host Chiefs' upcoming fixtures, starting with the clash against City, Grobbelaar admitted that the surface still has some bit of patches after work was done on it. "We're hosting the first game on the 13th (August) and you're going to ask me again why is the northern side not as good as other sides," he said.

"On the northern side, it (will still) have a bit of patchiness for about two weeks and it will be fully grown in. As a stakeholder in the football industry, we must play our role as venues. A football page is dependent on a good playing surface.

"For the spectacles that we anticipate this year, we all need to play our roles. I do understand it (the public frustration) but, as I said to you, not all pitches are hybrid. With the Kikuyu pitches, there is a problem with

the change of the season." FNB Stadium is a multi-purpose venue and frequently hosts major music concerts, with the most recent being American R&B superstar Chris Brown, who performed in front of over 90,000 fans. Grobbelaar acknowledged that such events contribute to the challenge of keeping the pitches in top condition.

"Most of the stadiums rely on other events as well. If you only maintain a pitch to play football, then that's a different story, but the minute you've got concerts and other events on the pitches, the maintenance and keeping it up to standard becomes a challenge," he explained. "We need to find the balance to be commercially viable and still deliver good surfaces for playing football. It is a challenge and no one can run away from that, but the venues need to also accept responsibility. "That is the problem and it's not commercially viable to only have football at the stadium. I can't speak for others, but a stadium like FNB, you won't be able to maintain the facility without it being used as a multi-purpose venue."

(The Citizen)



US government restricts sports visas for transgender women

THE U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced on Monday it has updated its immigration policy to restrict visa eligibility for transgender women seeking to compete in women's sports.

Under the policy update, USCIS will consider "the fact that a male athlete has been competing against women" as a negative factor when evaluating visa petitions in categories such as O-1A for extraordinary ability, EB-1 and EB-2 green cards for highly skilled workers, and national interest waivers.

"USCIS is closing the loophole for foreign male athletes whose only chance at winning elite sports is to change their gender identity and leverage their biological advantages against women," said USCIS spokesperson Matthew Tragesser.



"It's a matter of safety, fairness, respect, and truth that only female athletes receive a visa to come to the U.S. to participate in women's sports." The move aligns with broader efforts by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to regulate transgender participation in athletics and follows similar policies enacted at the state level across the country.

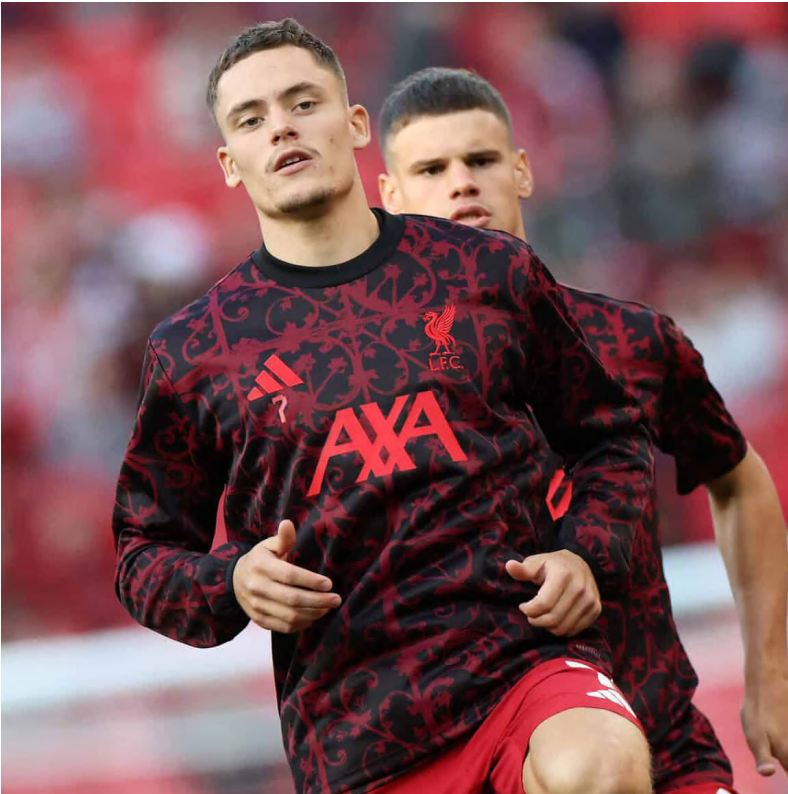
The United States Olympic &

Paralympic Committee last month updated its policy to align with an executive order signed earlier this year by Trump barring transgender women from competing in women's sports. Trump signed the "Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports" order in February, a directive that supporters said will restore fairness but critics argue infringes on the rights of a tiny minority of athletes. (Reuters)

Wirtz unfazed by huge Liverpool price tag

FLORIAN Wirtz says his huge price tag "doesn't matter" as he prepares for his first season in the Premier League after a switch to champions Liverpool from Bayer Leverkusen.

The attacking midfielder arrived at Anfield for an initial £100 million (\$132 million) that could rise to £116 million with add-ons, making his move a potential British record. However, speaking after impressing in a 3-2 friendly win over Athletic Bilbao on Monday, the 22-year-old brushed off the size of his transfer fee.



▲ Liverpool midfielder Florian Wirtz.

"I don't think about it. I just want to play football and how much money the clubs pay between each other, it doesn't matter," he said.

"Of course the big challenge is to win the title again and it is the most difficult thing so (I will) try and just create chances and also work against the ball. "I can also run a lot so (I will) bring this to the team and then with the ball I can make the team better and bring my teammates into better situations." Liverpool face FA Cup winners Crystal Palace in the season-opening Community Shield on Sunday and kick off their Premier League title defence at home to Bournemouth on August 15.

Germany international Wirtz said he was relishing the challenge.

"There are some differences to Germany but I think there is also something I can learn and make me better so I am really looking forward to it," he said.

"It's more intense and more physical, every player is really strong, really fast. That is what everybody is telling me." – Big spenders –

Liverpool have spent more than £250 million so far in the summer transfer window on a clutch of new players including Wirtz, Hugo Ekitike, Milos Kerkez, Jeremie Frimpong,

pong, who also came from Leverkusen, and Giorgi Mamardashvili.

The club are understood to have made a bid of around £110 million plus potential add-ons for unsettled Newcastle striker Alexander Isak last week, which was rejected.

Manager Arne Slot said after two friendlies against Athletic Bilbao at Anfield on Monday that there was "always room for improvement" despite the club's march to a record-equalling 20th league title last season. "We've added a few, in my opinion, extra weapons," said the Dutchman. "So, Florian has a lot of creativity in the final third. We've lost with Trent (Alexander-Arnold, who has signed for Real Madrid) a lot of creativity from the back.

"Trent's crosses and picking out

runners was so special -- I think Flo has this quality as well in a totally different position."

Liverpool paid tribute to late forward Diogo Jota in their first matches at Anfield since the forward and his brother Andre Silva died in a car crash in Spain last month. Slot said in his programme notes that it had been a "tough time for everyone connected with the club, but especially for Diogo's family, his wife, his children and friends".

"We cannot imagine the pain that they have been going through, and the club will continue to give them all the support they can going forward," he wrote.

"We will always carry him with us in our hearts, in our thoughts, wherever we go." (AFP)



Arsenal have 'belief' to end trophy drought, says Arteta

ARSENAL manager Mikel Arteta said the Gunners believe this season will be different as they aim to get over a series of near misses at winning silverware.

Arteta has not won a trophy since lifting the FA Cup in his debut season in charge in 2019/20.

However, he has transformed Arsenal back into serial contenders for major trophies.

Arteta's men have finished second in the Premier League for the past three years and reached the Champions League semifinals for the first time since 2009 last season.

The pressure is now on the Spaniard to get over the line after another major investment in new players in the transfer window. Nearly £200 million (\$266 million) has been spent on new striker Viktor Gyokeres, midfielders Martin Zubimendi and Christian Norgaard, centre-back Cristhian Mosquera as well as winger Noni Madueke and goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga.

"We know what our targets are and what we want to achieve this season – there is a big belief in our ability to achieve that," Arteta said in his programme notes ahead of Wednesday's

pre-season friendly against Villarreal. "We have been very, very close the last few seasons and the whole team is going to determine whether we achieve that or not.

"But at the same time, we have to make sure that we don't lose sight of what we have to do on a daily basis to get to the levels that we want.

"We have to set the demands that we want within this goal, because that's the most important thing – the internal demands have to always exceed any external demand. That is what we are trying to achieve every single day."

Arteta added he wants his players to feel "invincible" at home thanks to a special connection with the club's fans. "We want our people to start connecting with our players straight away, to start to build momentum and to start to feel that at home we are invincible," he said.

"That we play here with such passion, energy and connection with our people, that we are going to win the game."

Arsenal begin their Premier League campaign with a blockbuster trip to Manchester United on 17 August. (AFP)

Isak told to train alone by Newcastle

ALEXANDER Isak's future at Newcastle hangs in the balance after the Swedish striker was reportedly told to train apart from the rest of the squad on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old has been linked with a British transfer record move to Liverpool after failing to feature in Newcastle's pre-season preparations. Isak missed the Magpies' trip to Singapore and South Korea, citing a minor thigh injury, and instead flew to Spain to train at former club Real Sociedad.

He has since returned to Tyneside but Sky Sports reported that Isak was instructed to train after the rest of the squad had departed on Wednesday. "You have to earn the right to train with us. We are Newcastle United," manager

Eddie Howe told reporters earlier in pre-season. "We will make sure that any player earns the right to train with the group. No player can expect to act poorly and train with the group as normal."

Liverpool have seen a £110 million bid for Isak rejected, according to reports, with Newcastle seeking closer to £150 million. Another major hurdle to any deal is Newcastle's ongoing struggles to finalise a deal to replace Isak. They face competition from Manchester United for RB Leipzig striker Benjamin Sesko after missing out on Joao Pedro, Hugo Ekitike and Liam Delap earlier in the window. Liverpool have already splashed out over £250 million this window on Ekitike, Florian Wirtz, Milos Kerkez and Jeremie Frimpong. (Reuters)

Athletics Eswatini names new COO

By Sibusiso Masilela
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ATHLETICS Eswatini has named Mathokoza Dlamini as their Chief Operations Officer (COO). Dlamini has replaced Thoba Mazibuko, who is now working for the Olymp Africa Centre. The New COO was announced by Association President Zakhele Dlamini on Wednesday at Sigwaca House.

"We are pleased to announce our new COO on a two-year contract. We are confident that he will contribute to taking the organisation to greater heights and help the association attain the Together for Gold mandate," he said.

Dlamini said he was happy with the appointment.

"I am grateful for the opportunity, and I promise to work with the entire organisation in taking the organisation to greater heights," he said.

The new COO previously worked for the Eswatini Swimming Association.

AE has concluded the Track and field season following the recent Confederation of African Athletics senior regional championships in Zimbabwe.

The mother body is now left with three road races before the end of the year in the Kwamagogo race, Women's race, and the prestigious Imbube marathon.



▲ Athletics Eswatini president Zakhele Dlamini and Gender Equity chairperson Ncobile Dlamini welcoming new COO Mathokoza Dlamini.

Grassroots festivals, juniors leagues take centre stage in RES Siyakha Programme

By Sibusiso Masilela
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GRASSROOTS festivals and junior leagues have taken centre stage in the RES Siyakha 1800 Football Programme, with action witnessed week in and week out.

With most official leagues on break, the action in the RES Siyakha 1800 Programme is surely bringing the vibe to the football-thirsty people in the sugar-belt and neighbouring areas. Hordes of supporters are witnessed in the different venues where the games are staged, and this brings motivation to the youngsters who are participants in this programme.

Over the past week, several grassroots festivals were hosted in different venues, whereby a huge number of participants were witnessed. Targeting children between the ages of 6-12 years, both boys and girls, the grassroots festivals provide the youngsters with the perfect opportunity to be imparted with the relevant football basics.

Under the watchful eyes of qualified coach educators, the children are taught the basics like ball control, passing, shooting and dribbling.

The juniors' leagues also bring a fair share of the entertainment in the RES Siyakha 1800 programme, with about 10 different leagues featured, both the under 13 and under 15.

Some of the areas covered include Mafucula, Mhlume, Simunye, Ngomane, and Shewula.

In all these leagues, the teams are demonstrating a high level of determination in contention for the prizes at stake, and without any doubt, football development is winning.

The RES Siyakha 1800 Football Programme is a brainchild of Royal Eswatini Sugar (RES) Corporation, played under the auspices of Lubombo Regional Football Association (LRFA).

The sponsorship is equally contested in three categories being the grassroots, juniors, and seniors league.

Initially, the programme targeted 1800 participants, but the number has exceeded 4000 participants over the years.

RES Siyakha product coach to lead COSSASA-bound Eswatini U13 squad

By Sibusiso Masilela
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RES Siyakha 1800 Football Programme is surely making an impact in local football circles, as evidenced by the appointment of one of the programme's coach educators for national duties.

Simunye Soccer Academy Coach Lucky Nyembe has been appointed head-coach of the Eswatini squad for the Confederation of Schools Sports Association of Southern Africa (COSSASA) games to be hosted by the country late this month.

This was confirmed by Eswatini Schools Sports Association (ESSA) Treasurer Lucky Dlamini, who also congratulated Nyembe for his appointment.

"Congratulations to Lucky Nyembe for being appointed head coach of COSSASA Schools Sports squad under 13 boys football," said Dlamini.

Nyembe said he is humbled by the appointment.

"I am very thankful for this wonderful opportunity, and I promise to work hard for the upliftment of ESSA, RES Siyakha, and Simunye Soccer Academy," Nyembe said.

RES Siyakha 1800 Football Programme Manager Sicelo Nene congratulated Nyembe for the appointment and further emphasized on the impact the RES Siyakha programme is bringing, not only to the playing staff but also to coaches.

"First and foremost, I would like to congratulate Mr Nyembe on the appointment. I know that through his hard work, he got this recognition. He played a big role in player development under this programme, and we are proud. As RES Siyakha, we are very much happy, and we wish him all the best as we are made to believe that the exposure and experience he will gain will also help us here. This is a testimony that the RES Siyakha programme has an impact on the development of football in the country," Nene said.



▲ some of the junior teams in the Siyakha tournament.

FNB ESWATINI CHALLENGE 2025 PRO-AM FOCUS

Old Mutual sponsors prizes

By Chris Dlamini

THE first day of the FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025's PRO-AM proved a memorable experience for the bank's clients.

This was in the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club's perfectly maintained greens on Tuesday, where corporates like Old Mutual and Dixie's International partnered with FNB Eswatini for prizes and apparel.

Various sectors of business enjoyed the course over 18 holes, with each team having one professional from either Eswatini or abroad.

Imagine playing with Tiger Woods as your teammate. Well, amateurs and first-timers had that privilege to play alongside the visiting professionals from as far as England, Ireland, Greece, Chile, Sweden, Australia, Indonesia, Scotland, Zimbabwe, and South Africa among others.

For the great experience, swings and unforgettable moments, Old Mutual ensured great prizes that aligned with the organisation and good vibes at the arena, just a good sign

of what is coming in the main tournament starting on August 7 (Thursday) to August 9 (Saturday).

The PRO-AM continued to Day 2 on Wednesday.

From tee-off to the 18th hole, the action at Ezulwini Golf & Country Club set the tone for an exciting FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025.

The top three teams were awarded with the Old Mutual sponsored prizes, while every lady who played was honoured with a prize as well.

The Top Three Teams:

1. Hayden Griffiths (Professional), Dave Melvin, Nico Coetzee, and Paul Fortune - 93 points
 2. Nhlanhla Mtsetfwa (Professional), Victor Mavundla, Genius Sihlongonyane, and Mduduzi Nyoni - 91 points
 3. Raymond Mathonsi (Professional), Rory Pelsar, Louis Barnard, and Kerwine Fortune - 90 points
- Nearest pin 3 - Rashid Mohammed
Nearest pin 6 - Rory Pelsar
Nearest pin 14 - Lwazi Sihlongonyane
Nearest pin 18 - Patson Dlamini
Longest drive 7 - Mduduzi Maphalala
Longest drive 17 - Nosimilo Kgomo



▲ The number one winning team of the PRO-AM competition.



▲ Second-placed winners with their prizes.



▲ FNB Eswatini CEO Thokozani "TK" Dlamini.

Grateful to Pros for client PRO-AM — FNB CEO

By Chris Dlamini

FNB Eswatini's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thokozani "TK" Dlamini expressed their gratitude to the various golf professionals for agreeing to share the stage with the bank's clients.

In his brief remarks on Tuesday after the first of two days of the PRO-AM featuring their clients, he appreciated the professionals.

"Today's been a beautiful day on the greens, filled with lots of laughter, great play, and conversation between the different teams as well. It was made possible by you.

"Many of you have busy schedules in your organisations, so we do not take it lightly that you took the time to be here. I'd also like to thank all the professionals who agreed to join our clients today (Tuesday and tomorrow



▲ Ladies who participated in the PRO-AM received prizes.

row (Wednesday)," said Dlamini.

The CEO said he had no doubt that some of the pro-tips would go a long way for the clients.

"I have no doubt that some of our clients took them well. Do not be surprised if you see them line up in next year's main tournament," said Dlamini as the floor went in stitches of laughter.

He also congratulated the winners of the

first day. He explained that this was their way of saying 'thank you' to their clients and partners.

"As a business, we believe in long-term partnerships, and there was no better way to strengthen ties than in the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club. He further gave a thumbs up to the team that was responsible for the course as well as the tournament organising team.

By Chris Dlamini

"IT'S a relief."

These were the words of Eswatini Schools Sports Association (ESSA) President Zakhele Myeni. He was responding to the question of Eswatini hosting the Confederation of School Sport Associations of Southern Africa (COSSASA) next month.

"We're excited and relieved that the Somhlolo National Stadium will be available to host the COSSASA Games 2025. We saw that the government has fixed the synthetic track as it was our main worry," said Myeni.

He said they were grateful to government, through the Sports, Culture and Youth

COSSASA: Govt fixes Somhlolo synthetic track

Affairs for its efforts to ensure the stadium was in high competition standards both for football and athletics which are all part of the COSSASA Games.

Myeni explained that initially, Eswatini was to host the athletics only, but it was then decided that all the available sports codes in the school games be brought here once and for all.

This means other venues like Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini and the OlympAfrica Centre in Lobamba will come in handy. Myeni said the games cover track

and field as well as ball games like netball, volleyball, and basketball.

The games are set to be held towards the end of August, but the dates are yet to be confirmed.

ESSA has already got their team, with the selection process for soccer and other disciplines getting underway last weekend to conclude all squads.

The team consists of the best athletes who excelled in the Schools National Track and Field Championships at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini, among others



▲ ESSA President Zakhele Myeni.



'Birds' recall axed Mabila

By Chris Dlamini

JUST a few days after unceremoniously parting ways with senior defender Sifiso Mabila, Mbabane Swallows has been forced to recall him.

The seasoned and decorated defender was, according to sources close to him and Swallows, told he was no longer needed in the club. This happened just like it did to his former veteran teammates Wonder 'Samba Jive' Nhleko, Tony 'TT' Tsabedze, and Felix 'Fela' Badenhorst, who all left the red and white in unexpected ways.

However, for Mabila, it has been hardly a week since he was informed about the decision to release him.

"He has been recalled by management following a social media spat by supporters.

How can you Kingsley and then release Mabila when we don't even hear about new players," said an impeccable source.

The source said Mabila was expected to report for training again on Wednesday after missing the last few days. Meanwhile, Mabila joined Swallows in the 2011 season.

Successes

He has been an important player for the Beautiful Birds in most of their successes, domestically and beyond in the CAF Champions League and CAF Confederation Cup in 2017 and 2018. He has also won nearly every trophy on offer before the MoMo Cup, 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025 with Swallows.

Swallows Public Relations Officer (PRO) Knowledge 'Bhambo' Ngwenya affirmed the recall.

"Yes, he is back," he responded.

The latest development also means Mabila will be travelling with the club to Angola early next month.



▲ Green Mamba striker Kwanele Shongwe fighting for the ball with Swallows defender Sifiso Mabila.

Tricky draw for national team Under-17

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE National Under-17 has been handed a tricky draw in the 2025 COSAFA Under-17 championships.

The junior national side will take on Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Comoros in Harare between September 11-20, 2025.

The young lads head coach, Nsindiso Gama, welcomed the draw when contacted.

"It's a tricky draw for us as we have been pitted against strong opponents such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Comoros has vastly improved, and we need to work hard as a team by coming up with a proper strategy as a technical team for the competition," he said.

Zambia is the defending champion in the competition and the most successful side in its history, while South Africa is next on the list of most prolific winners.

In the previous edition, the top three teams advanced to the TotalEnergies CAF U-17



▲ National Under-17 male team players in full sprints during their training session at EFA technical centre.

Africa Cup of Nations finals, which in turn served as the qualifiers for the newly expanded 48-team FIFA Under-17 World Cup, which includes 10 teams from the African continent.

► **Group A:** Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Comoros, Eswatini

► **Group B:** Zambia, South Africa, Madagascar, Malawi

► **Group C:** Angola, Botswana, Mauritius, Lesotho

THE FULL DRAW



▲ Timothy Shongwe.

Timothy accepts EFA disqualification

By Sibusiso Masilela
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COSAFA vice president Timothy Shongwe has accepted his disqualification in the Eswatini Football Association elections.

Shongwe was nominated for the vice president position, where he was contesting with the likes of Steve Horton, Nkosingiphile Shongwe, Nichomedus 'Ace' Mashwama Sonnyboy Mabuza, and Simanga Nhleko.

He was among the disqualified following the announcement of the eligible candidates by Chairman of the Ethics Committee Siphosini Dlamini on Tuesday.

"I won't challenge the decision of the ethics committee, as it can hinder the progress of the sport. My intention was to contribute in the development of football in the country, not for positions. I wish the eligible the best of luck during the elections," he said.

Two disqualified executive member position candidates, Peter 'Touch' Magagula and Bhekani Khumalo, have challenged their disqualification with the Appeals board.

The president position will be contested by the incumbent president, Peter 'Samora' Simelane, and Mashumi Shongwe on August 17, 2025, at Hilton Garden court.

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 for the Women's executive member position.

“

I won't challenge the decision of the ethics committee, as it can hinder the progress of the sport. My intention was to contribute in the development of football in the country, not for positions





Nabi awaits confirmation on Ighodaro availability

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Sport

‘Birds’ recall axed Mabila

... Veteran defender Sifiso Mabila back in the ‘Birds’ nest after being recalled by club management a week after he had been parted ways with the Capital City giants. *Page 23*