



▲ Members of Cabinet with their Turkmenistan counterparts take a group picture after the groundbreaking investment talks. (Pic: Lesang Makhubu-State Photographer)

Eswatini, Turkmenistan to change zero trade status

By King’s Office Correspondent

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN –Eswatini and Turkmenistan have started talks to change the zero trade status between the two countries. High level discussions, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, were held yesterday to initiate a relationship aimed at fostering mutual economic and technological growth for both economies.

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Eswatini begins repatriation talks of convicted immigrants

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Guava and Dragon fruit training equips farmers

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▲ Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, outlined key areas for collaboration, with a focus on information communication and technology (ICT), agriculture, mining, manufacturing, infrastructure and energy, among others.



▲ Members of the Eswatini and Turkmenistan delegations during the high level discussions.

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High level discussions, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, were held yesterday to initiate a relationship aimed at fostering mutual economic and technological growth for both economies.

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, outlined key areas for collaboration, with a focus on information communication and technology (ICT), agriculture, mining, manufacturing, infrastructure and energy, among others.

The country was represented by the ministers for ICT Savannah Maziya, Commerce Trade and Industry Manqoba Khumalo, as well as Public Works and Transport Chief Ndhluhlaza Ndwandwe. Also present were the country's Ambassador to the United Nations Thami Dlamini and the Chief Officer in the King's office Chief Mgwagwa Gamedze.

During the deliberations, Eswatini expressed keen interest in partnering with Turkmenistan on space and satellite technology, data centres, and the manufacturing of complex products such as SIM cards and electronic devices. To formalise this commitment, Eswatini will initiate official communication through its foreign affairs ministry to facilitate the signing of a cooperation agreement.

The minister said the country would send correspondence to confirm Eswatini's participation in an upcoming ICT exhibition in Turkmenistan in November, underscoring the nation's enthusiasm for deepening technological ties. Energy cooperation was also highlighted as a priority, with Eswatini seeking to bolster initiatives in ICT and other sectors through sustainable energy solutions.

Infrastructure development emerged as another key area of focus. Eswatini proposed exploring the sale of bitumen to serve regional markets, leveraging its strategic position to facilitate trade. Additionally, the

minister expressed interest in Turkmenistan's raw material stock exchange, requesting further details to explore opportunities for purchasing products.

Textile trade was another significant point of discussion. Eswatini shared interest in importing cotton from Turkmenistan while indicating the existence of a growing textile sector that employs over 30 000 emaSwati, inviting Turkmenistan to looking into how the two countries can maximize on each others' expertise. Agriculture was also on the agenda, with Eswatini keen to explore the export of its agricultural products, while exploring importation of wheat and rice grain from to Turkmenistan.

The mining sector was highlighted as presenting further opportunities, with Eswatini inviting Turkmenistan to explore its rich mineral resources such as iron ore and high quality coal. In the oil sector, discussions centred on securing fuel reserves through access to Turkmenistan's raw products. Additionally, Eswatini's sugar industry was highlighted as a potential export avenue, with plans to explore supplying sugar to Turkmenistan.

In closing, Minister Shakantu thanked Turkmenistan for the productive discussions and insightful presentations from its ministries and state companies. "This marks the beginning of a fruitful relationship," she said, expressing optimism about expanding cooperation into new areas as engagement deepens.

On the other hand the Turkmenistan's ministers welcomed Eswatini's interest in space and satellite technology, data centers, and the production of advanced products like SIM cards and electronic devices. They expressed readiness to formalize these efforts through a cooperation agreement, with details to be coordinated via diplomatic channels.

The ministers also extended an invitation to Eswatini to participate in Turkmenistan's ICT exhibition in November, 2025. Energy was highlighted as a critical area of collaboration, with Turkmenistan eager to explore the country's proposal for bitumen trade to serve regional markets. Eswatini's interest in Turkmenistan's raw material stock exchange platform was also welcomed, with the ministers pledging to provide detailed informa-



▲ Minister of ICT Savannah Maziya during the session.



▲ Some of the Eswatini delegation in the session.

tion to facilitate potential trade in various products.

On textile cooperation Turkmenistan expressed enthusiasm for exporting cotton to Eswatini while exploring opportunities to benefit from Eswatini's established textile industry. In the oil sector, Turkmenistan responded positively to Eswatini's interest in securing fuel reserves, offering to discuss the supply of raw materials. Additionally, the

country noted Eswatini's proposal to export sugar, expressing interest in exploring this trade opportunity.

Eswatini was thanked for its proactive engagement and praised the productive exchange of ideas, with the Turkmenistan ministers expressing optimism about expanding cooperation as discussions progress.

By King's Office Correspondent

Eswatini begins repatriation talks of convicted immigrants

● Minister assures SA of safe and dignified return to their home countries



▲ Following the investment talks, officials of the two governments exchanged gifts and info-packs marking the start of the trade cooperation between the two countries. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu has since responded Republic of South Africa on the five convicted immigrants received by Eswatini from the US.

AWAZA, TURKMENISTAN – The Eswatini government has begun repatriation talks with the countries of the five convicted immigrants received from the United States of America recently.

The five third-country immigrants are from Yemen, Cuba, Jamaica, Laos and Vietnam.

In an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, Eswatini has assured a concerned neighbouring South Africa, fearing a regional security threat, that the immigrants will have a safe and dignified return to their home countries.

The minister is said to be encouraged by the progress made regarding the talks so far.

The ministry has indicated that the repatriation of the individuals poses no security risk to any other parties both within and outside the facilities in which they are currently housed as stringent security protocols have also been adopted.

The minister's response follows correspondence received from the Republic of South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation regarding their discomfort on the transit of five third-party nationals from the United States of America currently kept at the country's correctional facilities.

She said Eswatini has implemented comprehensive measures, including close collaboration with international organizations specializing in migrant protection. These efforts, it has been explained, encompass not only logistical support for repatriation but also tailored reintegration assistance to facilitate a sustainable transition.

Minister Shakantu has assured the Republic of South Africa and Emaswati that the facilitation of deportation of the individuals poses no security risk to any other parties both within and outside the facilities in which they are currently housed.

The minister stated that Eswatini in all its dealings with external parties is guided by its foreign policy principle of "Having No Enemy – Anginasitsa," and the Kingdom is committed to fostering peace, goodwill and cooperation globally.

"This philosophy underpins our longstanding role as a sanctuary for displaced persons and a mediator in regional and international affairs.

"In line with this legacy, Eswatini is facilitating the safe and orderly repatriation of those individuals to their countries of origin, while addressing the sensitivities

surrounding their criminal backgrounds," she said. The ministry stated that the five individuals were convicted of standard criminal offenses, comparable to those of other inmates currently held in the country's correctional system.

"They are held under the highest security protocols in our most secure facilities, ensuring there is no cause for concern regarding potential escapes. Through His Majesty's Correctional Services, we leverage internationally recognized rehabilitation programmes to support the reintegration of displaced persons. In collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), we are providing logistical support and tailored reintegration assistance to ensure a sustainable transition for these individuals upon their return to their home

countries," the minister assured.

The ministry stated that the Kingdom of Eswatini deeply values its enduring partnership with the Republic of South Africa and is committed to open communication and cooperation on this matter.

Express

"We express our gratitude for the continued support and understanding of our partners as we work together to address the shared concerns," the ministry stated.

The minister confirmed that they have already responded formally to the concerns being raised in the Non-Paper Dermarche received on Monday.

Shakantu said this country's legacy informs its approach to the current situation, ensuring that Eswatini's actions reflect both compassion and responsibility.

She noted that the Kingdom of Eswatini is a trusted mediator and sanctuary for displaced persons, regardless of the circumstances leading to their displacement.

The minister's reference to being a trusted mediator and sanctuary for displaced persons is drawn from the country's role at the height of civil wars across the continent, including the apartheid South Africa, in Mozambique, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This era saw many of these country's displaced citizens seeking refugee status in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

As a result of the influx, the country had to create two centres at Malindza and Ndvevane Refuge Centres, while no specific centre was created for South Africans as they integrated freely with emaSwati.

Eswatini joins Ghana in mourning after tragic loss of key govt figures



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini.

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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THE Kingdom of Eswatini has expressed profound sorrow following the tragic death of two Ghanaian Cabinet Ministers in a military helicopter crash.

Prime Minister Russell Dlamini conveyed heartfelt condolences to the Republic of Ghana, emphasising the deep ties and solidarity shared between the two nations during this moment of grief. In a formal statement, Prime Minister Dlamini remarked, "The Kingdom of Eswatini has learned with deep sadness of the passing of two Cabinet Ministers from the Republic

of Ghana, the vice chairman of a ruling party, a national Security Adviser, and crew members in a military helicopter crash in the central Ashanti region on Wednesday."

In his statement, Dlamini extended not only condolences from the Kingdom of Eswatini but also a message of solidarity to the families of the deceased. "On behalf of His Majesty the King, Her Majesty the Indlovukazi, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Eswatini, we extend our sincerest condolences to President John Mahama, the Government and the People of Ghana, and especially to the families of all the deceased and loved ones," he said.

The helicopter crash, which occurred in a remote forested area in central Ghana, claimed the lives of all eight individuals on board, including Defence Minister Edward

Omane Boamah and Environment Minister Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed. The ministers were en route from the capital city of Accra to the southern town of Obuasi when the unfortunate incident transpired. The Ghanaian presidency confirmed the details of the crash, stating that it involved three crew members and five passengers.

Considering this tragedy, Ghana has declared three days of national mourning, with flags flying at half-mast across the country. President John Mahama, through his chief of staff, Julius Debrah, expressed condolences on behalf of the government, stating, "The president and government extend our condolences and sympathies to the families of our comrades and the servicemen who died in service to the country."



▲ The Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Thulisile Dladla, has officially handed over three houses constructed by Maloma Colliery Limited in partnership with the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA).



DPM hands over three houses constructed by Maloma Colliery for vulnerable families

By **Noaba Ntshakala**
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THE Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Thulisile Dladla, has officially handed over three houses constructed by Maloma Colliery Limited in partnership with the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA). These houses form part of a bigger housing initiative comprising seven units, collectively valued at E600,000.

The remaining four houses, which are already completed, will be handed over at a later date by the Deputy Prime Minister.

The handover ceremony began at Siphondo, where a one-room house was built for the late Gogo Elizabeth Myeni, whose home had been destroyed by fire. Despite her passing before the completion of the house, her grandchildren received the keys to the new home on her behalf. Senator Dladla applauded Maloma Colliery Limited for stepping in to support the elderly woman, praising the company's efforts in uplifting the lives of vulnerable citizens. She reminded the family that the house is a gift from Their Majesties and urged them to take great care of it.

A grandchild of Gogo Myeni expressed deep gratitude on behalf of the family, thanking the mine and all those who contributed to supporting them during this time.

From Siphondo, the Deputy Prime Minister's delegation moved to Mabantaneni, where another house was officially handed over to Zephaniah Xaba. Addressing the community, Senator Dladla echoed His Majesty King Mswati III's message that all emaSwati deserve to live in dignity. She commended Maloma Colliery for aligning itself with His Majesty's vision by implementing tangible projects that transform lives. Indvuna Aldonaij Mamba, speaking on behalf of the community, expressed gratitude to the DPM for her tireless work across the country in caring for emaSwati.

He also thanked Maloma Colliery Limited for its continuous contribution to community development, particularly through employment opportunities and generous initiatives like the housing project. Accepting his new home, Xaba expressed heartfelt thanks to His Majesty the King, describing the house as a blessing from the Throne. In a lighthearted moment, he joked that he wished his children were present to see the house, so they could now connect electricity for him.

The final stop was at Mndobandoba, where the Deputy Prime Minister handed over a two-room structure built for Zodwa Gamed-



▲ The Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Thulisile Dladla during the opening of one of the houses.



▲ One of the house which was handed over by the DPM built by Maloma Colliery.

ze. This house was constructed following a directive from His Majesty King Mswati III, who responded to Gamedze's request for assistance. Senator Dladla noted that the structure is not just a shelter, but a response from the Throne to the cry of a citizen.

She again applauded Maloma Colliery Limited for acting swiftly and professionally in honouring His Majesty's instruction, and for their commitment to bringing dignity to the lives of ordinary emaSwati.

At all three handover ceremonies, Maloma Colliery Limited Board Member and Chairperson of the Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Committee, Myzo Magagula, delivered remarks on behalf of the company. She emphasised that the handover of the houses was not just a corporate gesture, but a deeply symbolic act aligned with His Majesty's call for decent housing for all emaSwati.

Quoting His Majesty's speech at the official opening of the second session of the 12th Parliament, she noted that the mine is

proud to contribute to this national vision.

"It is both a great honour and a heartfelt privilege to stand before you on this important occasion — the official handover of homes under the Maloma Housing Project," she said. "These are not simply structures of brick and mortar, but symbols of hope, care, and a shared commitment to building a stronger Eswatini."

Magagula also recognised the contribution of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and NDMA, stating that their collaboration made the project possible. She further emphasized that Maloma Colliery is not just invested in mining coal, but also in uplifting the communities surrounding its operations.

"We recognise that our success is intertwined with the wellbeing of our host communities, and as such, we are continuously working to become more than just a mining company. We strive to be an agent of sustainable development," she said.

Paying tribute to the late Gogo Myeni, Ma-



▲ Maloma Colliery Limited Board Member and CSI Chairperson Myzo Magagula speaking during one of the handovers.



▲ The DPM Thulisile Dladla speaking during one of the handovers.

gagula said her house will stand as a legacy and testament to how collective goodwill can restore dignity and bring about change. She also commended the patience and trust shown by the beneficiary families throughout the process.

Inyanga heavily assaulted by mob on rape, theft allegations

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

TENSIONS ran high on Thursday as an alleged serial rapist, who also claims to be a traditional healer, was heavily assaulted by an angry mob after he was accused of raping and robbing a woman of her cell phone.

The dramatic incident unfolded in the usually quiet community of Mbekelweni, sending shockwaves through the area. According to eyewitnesses, the suspect was caught shortly after the woman raised an alarm, accusing him of sexually assaulting her and taking her phone.

Community members who responded to the woman's cries reportedly chased down the man and subjected him to a severe beating before police arrived at the scene. Residents say they have had enough of increasing reports of sexual violence in the area and took matters into their own hands in frustration.

"The community is tired. Women are living in fear. We want justice, and this time we could not just sit back and watch," said a resident who asked not to be named.

The suspect, who is said to have a history of similar allegations, was left severely

injured from the assault. He was taken into police custody and transported to hospital under police guard.

Chief Police Information and Communications Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, confirmed the incident.

"There was a man who was assaulted by a mob on allegations of rape at Mbekelweni. However, we are currently conducting our own investigations to establish the facts surrounding this matter," said Vilakati.

She further urged members of the public to allow the law to take its course and to refrain from taking justice into their own hands.

"As REPS, we understand the frustration of communities affected by crime, but we strongly discourage mob justice. It undermines the legal process and could result in further harm or loss of life," she added.

While police have yet to confirm the man's involvement in other rape cases, residents in an interview with this Publication insisted that the man has long been suspected of terrorising women in the area under the guise of offering traditional healing services.

It should be noted that the latest incident has once again brought to light the issue of gender-based violence in Eswatini, as well as the growing concern around community members resorting to vigilante justice in the absence of swift legal recourse.



▲ Chief Police Information and Communications Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati.

2 yrs in for stripping, stealing parts of a car

THEFT has upgraded to another level in Manzini as a 38-year-old man was sentenced to two years in prison without an option of a fine for stealing and stripping off the parts of a motor vehicle worth E50 000.

Celumusa Leon Mkoko of Makholweni area together with Sipehele Sivesonkhe Mamba (38) of Makholweni area stole a silver grey Mazda 2 sedan registered BSD 634 DH, belonging to Lizwi Tfwala, which they later abandoned at Fairview North, having stripped off most of its parts.

They committed the offence on June 28, 2025 at Standard Traders. This resulted in the duo being charged with contravening the Motor Vehicle Act No.16 of 1991.

Mkoko appeared before Magistrate Sihle Dlodlu yesterday at the Manzini Magistrates Court after Mamba's lawyer applied for a separation of trial on the matter based on medical grounds as his client (Mamba) was reportedly not feeling well.

When leading evidence before court, Tfwala mentioned that he plied his trade as a barber at a salon situated next to Yesive Supermarket.

He stated that on the day the offence was committed; he had parked his motor vehicle next to Standard Traders parking lot and he

went to his work place to collect something, leaving the engine running.

He stated that after he had parked his motor vehicle at the said parking lot, he came back, only to discover that the car had been stolen and thereafter, he reported the matter to the police.

The investigative officer in the matter was also called to lead evidence in order to prove the commission of the offence. While leading evidence, he told the court that he and other police officers attended to the crime scene and upon arrival, they found the motor vehicle abandoned in a bush at Fairview North. He pointed out that they discovered that the car had its four wheels, wheel caps, and battery stolen.

He added that the steering cover was found on the ground after being removed from the steering wheel.

"There was a key that was found on the ground. The car radio was also stolen," said the investigating officer.

Mkoko pleaded guilty to the offence and he was found guilty as per his own plea.

He mitigated for a lenient sentence on grounds that he was a first offender, who was remorseful for committing the offence.

He also mentioned that he was propelled by personal circumstances to commit the offence.



10K VIP Toilets to Transform Sanitation in Shiselweni Region

IN a groundbreaking step towards improving sanitation and hygiene in Eswatini's underserved areas, a total of 10,000 ventilated improved pit (VIP) toilets are being constructed across rural and peri-urban communities in the Shiselweni Region under the WASH Shiselweni Region Initiative.

Funded by the World Bank, the project is a multi-ministerial collaboration involving the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Tinkhundla Administration and Development, and the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC).

The initiative is currently being rolled out in three Tinkhundla — Hosea, Shiselweni 1, and Zombodze Emuva — including informal settlements such as Hlathikhulu and Nhlangano.

Overseeing the implementation is Tarutium Global Consulting, an international firm responsible not only for monitoring the construction of sanitation facilities but also for equipping communities with training on sustainable hygiene practices. One of the pilot projects in Mangwaneni is reported to be nearing completion, setting the pace for the rest of the rollout.

The project marks a significant turning point for the Shiselweni region, which has long struggled with inadequate sanitation infrastructure. The introduction of VIP toilets will drastically reduce exposure to waterborne diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, and typhoid — illnesses commonly triggered by rainwater washing human waste into streams and communal water sources.

"This is a game-changer for our communities," said Mandla Dlamini, one of the residents in Hlathikhulu. "We've lived with poor sanitation for years, and this project brings hope for a cleaner, healthier life."



Beyond improving health, the WASH initiative is poised to boost economic activity. Access to clean water and sanitation allows residents to invest time and energy in productive ventures such as home gardening and small-scale agriculture, enhancing food security and generating household income.

In a region ranked last on the country's poverty index, the impact of improved hygiene and sanitation could be transformative.

Officials have expressed optimism that the project will not only uplift public health standards but also contribute to the region's long-term social and economic development.

"This initiative embodies the principle that health and dignity begin with proper sanitation," said a spokesperson from the Ministry of Health, Tsabedze. "It's about breaking the cycle of disease and poverty through sustainable change."

As the rollout continues, communities are urged to actively participate in maintaining these new facilities and promoting hygienic practices, ensuring the sustainability and success of the project.

Pregnant woman granted bail in ‘Facata’ case

Stories by Delisa Thwala

A woman facing 190 charges linked to the ‘Facata’ fraud scheme has been granted bail by the High Court.

Philiswa Thembayena Sibandze was arrested on 11 July and charged with fraud, money laundering, organised crime, and cybercrime.

She appeared before Judge Zonke Magagula where she applied for bail, citing her pregnancy and complications that require specialist care.

In her affidavit, Sibandze said her medical needs could not be met at the Correctional facility and that continued incarceration posed a risk to her life and that of her unborn child. “My stay at the Correctional will worsen my condition and may lead to miscarriage or even death,” she submitted.

She argued that she was not in possession



▲ High Court of Eswatini.

of any evidence at the time of her arrest and claimed she was only present in the same house as her boyfriend, who is the primary suspect.

Sibandze is facing charges including 38 counts under the Prevention of Organised Crime Act and various sections of the Cybercrime Act. She told the court she

intends to plead not guilty.

The accused was granted bail of E15 000, with E8 000 to be paid in cash and the balance in surety. She committed to adhering to bail conditions, citing her responsibilities to a minor child and dependants. Sibandze also referenced similar cases where bail had been granted.

Man denied bail for alleged sexual harassment of minors

A 42-year-old man from Lomshiyo has been denied bail after appearing in court on charges of sexually harassing five girls aged 11 to 15.

Sikhumbuzo Rodgers Magagula is alleged to have committed the offences during June and July in areas including Ntfontjeni and the Mkopoyi River.

According to the charge sheet, he exposed himself to a 13-year-old girl and asked her for sex, made inappropriate remarks to another, and pointed at the private parts of a third girl. He is also accused of exposing himself to a 15-year-old and making sexual demands.

The final complaint involved humiliating remarks made to an 11-year-old after she returned from a toilet. Magagula elected to conduct his own defence. The Crown applied for his remand in custody, citing that he was a neighbour to the victims and could interfere with witnesses. Magistrate Nkosingiphile Maseko denied him bail and ordered that he be held in custody until August 20, 2025.

Theft suspect referred for mental evaluation

A 30-year-old man accused of stealing goods worth over E16 000 has been referred for psychiatric evaluation before standing trial.

Majaha Aranto appeared before Mbabane Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi on charges of theft linked to incidents at MDS teacher quarters, the Mbabane Police Training School, and Selection Park.

During court proceedings, the magistrate raised concerns over the accused’s mental state, noting that Aranto was unresponsive and laughed inappropriately. “He is just staring and laughing. How will I sentence a person like him?” Magistrate Nhlabatsi said in court. The magistrate ordered a psychiatric assessment to determine his fitness to stand trial. The matter was postponed pending the results of the evaluation.



▲ Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi.



Man gets 10 years for fatal E50 dispute

A 37-year-old man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for killing another man during an argument over E50.

Nkosingiphile Makhiza Magagula was convicted of culpable homicide by Manzini Principal Magistrate David Khumalo. The incident occurred on November 29, at New Village and involved co-accused Bafanabakhona Magagula, who remains at large. During the trial, a witness testified that he saw the two assaulting the deceased,

Simanga Gamedze. One used a stone and the other a knife. The witness said he tried to intervene and later found Gamedze dead at the scene.

Guilty

Nkosingiphile pleaded guilty and told the court he was married with three children and suffered from health issues.

He was sentenced without an option of a fine. The second accused will be tried separately once rearrested.

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You have read the rest, now read the best



▲ The woman who was arrested for posting someone’s HIV status (Tengetile Dlamini) at the Mbabane Magistrate’s Court.

Woman sentenced for disclosing HIV status on WhatsApp

A 28-year-old woman has been sentenced to three years imprisonment or a fine of E3 000 for cyber harassment after exposing a man’s HIV status via WhatsApp.

Tengetile Dlamini, from Mnyamatsini, appeared before Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi at the Mbabane Magistrate’s Court. She was charged under Section 28 of the Cyber Crime and Computer Crime Act of 2022.

According to the charge sheet, Dlamini used WhatsApp to share derogatory

messages about the man’s health, claiming he was HIV positive and on antiretroviral treatment.

The court heard that she used demeaning language intended to cause psychological harm. Dlamini told the court she acted out of frustration after learning that the man, with whom she had a personal relationship, had not disclosed his health status.

Magistrate Nhlabatsi noted the court’s responsibility to protect the public from online harassment. Dlamini was sentenced accordingly and offered the option to pay a fine.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

SA rand buoyed by stronger gold prices
SOUTH Africa's commodity-backed currency edged up in early trade on Thursday, supported by a weaker dollar and higher gold prices as investors fled to the safe-haven metal after steep tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump took effect.

At 0750 GMT the rand traded at 17.6850 against the dollar, up roughly 0.5% on Wednesday's close.

Ramaphosa speaks to Trump

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa held a telephone call with U.S. President Donald Trump on bilateral trade and the two countries' trade negotiating teams will have more detailed talks, Ramaphosa's office said on Thursday.

South Africa tried for months but failed to negotiate a trade deal with Washington ahead of Trump's deadline. U.S. imports from South Africa now face a 30% duty.

Angola gets back \$200 mln collateral

from JPMorgan ANGOLA got back \$200 million of collateral in May that it had to post to JPMorgan earlier in the year, the finance ministry said, after the price of its bond rebounded, easing pressure on its finances.

JPMorgan and Angola agreed in December a \$1 billion, one-year derivative contract known as a total return swap backed by \$1.9 billion in its government dollar bonds. (Reuters)

Business Association watches oil reserve project closely

By Delisa Magagula

A top executive from the Eswatini Bankers Association (EBA) says the financial sector is closely monitoring the development of a strategic oil reserve facility being funded by Taiwan, describing it as a major project with significant implications for the national economy.

Fikile Nkosi, the Managing Director of Nedbank Eswatini and EBA Chairperson, said banks in the country were watching the E5.2 billion project closely due to its expected impact across several industries.

"We are all eyeing this project and the magnitude it will play in Eswatini's economy. It is going to benefit various players and create opportunities beyond the fuel sector," Nkosi said.

Nkosi made the remarks during a business seminar attended by Taiwanese investors and local financial stakeholders. The meeting was part of a broader series of engagements tied to the oil reserve facility currently being planned for the Lubombo region.

The project, led by Taiwan's Overseas Investment and Development Corporation (OIDC), is intended to establish Eswatini's first Strategic Oil Reserve Facility. Once completed, it will have the capacity to store 60 days' worth of fuel around 80 million litres.

Construction is set to begin in the Lubombo region near Phuzumoya, with funding secured through a USD 300 million loan from the Export-Import Bank of Taiwan.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, the current national fuel reserve can only cover Eswatini for two to three days in the event of a supply disruption.

The new facility will significantly improve the country's energy security and reduce its dependence on fuel imports from neighbouring countries.

In April, King Mswati III and Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu officially launched the project. The facility is expected to be completed within three years.

Nkosi said the banking sector recognises the potential for the project to stimulate growth in multiple sectors.

"Projects of this magnitude create ripple effects. There is demand in construction, security, transport, logistics, and fuel retail these are areas where the banks can support clients," she said.

She added that increased business activity around the oil reserve could lead to stronger lending opportunities, more employment, and the expansion of infrastructure in the Lubombo region.

"We are also looking at how this kind of development shifts attention to underserved areas. When there is government commitment and international investment, the private sector follows," Nkosi said.

She emphasised that banks are ready to partner with both local and foreign entities involved in the oil reserve project.

The Taiwanese investor delegation, led by OIDC officials and representatives from the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA), expressed optimism about Eswatini's



▲ A model of the proposed strategic oil reserve facility being funded by Taiwan.



▲ EBA Chairperson, NedBank MD Fikile Nkosi says every bank is eyeing the Oil reserve project.

potential as an investment destination.

The seminar allowed for direct engagement with Eswatini's financial institutions, regulators, and public sector representatives.

Discussions centred on regulatory processes, cross-border financing, infrastructure readiness, and partnership models.

Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) Acting CEO Samkelo Dlamini said the seminar was crucial in aligning local financial expectations with international investor interests.

"We want to ensure that local players, including our banks, are part of these major investment projects from the beginning. That's how we ensure sustainability," he said.

Nkosi noted that Eswatini's financial institutions were increasingly aligning their strategies with national development goals.

"As bankers, we have to think beyond short-term returns. These long-term strategic projects are where we position ourselves to build and support the future economy," she said.

She highlighted the importance of transparent project governance and efficient

implementation to maintain investor and banking sector confidence.

"When a project is well-managed, everyone wins. The banks are willing to support we just need to be aligned from the planning to the execution stage," said Nkosi.

The Strategic Oil Reserve Facility is one of the largest infrastructure investments in Eswatini's recent history. Government officials have described it as critical to ensuring national energy resilience.

Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg signed the loan agreement in June 2025 during an official visit to Taiwan. At the time, he said the oil facility was part of a broader agenda to strengthen Eswatini's economic independence.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has stated that local procurement and job creation will be prioritised throughout the construction phase.

The Eswatini Bankers Association has previously called for improved coordination between government departments and the private sector on large infrastructure initiatives. Nkosi said the oil reserve project presents an opportunity to implement that approach.

"We are optimistic, but we are also practical. Our role is to finance and support but that requires access to accurate information and inclusion in planning processes," she said.

She urged project stakeholders to ensure open lines of communication with financial institutions and to work collaboratively to unlock value for the broader economy. "We are ready to be part of this," she said.

Worth mentioning is that the EBA is an association consisting of 6 member banks that are fully licensed by the Central Bank of Eswatini.

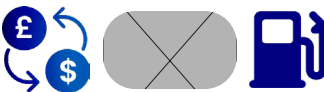
Established and registered in the year 2006 for some main objectives, which include to encourage and promote fair, proper and orderly conditions in the operation of the banking industry consistent with competitive conditions in the industry.

They also provide a forum for consideration of matters of policy and mutual interest concerning members.



FX RATES

| Notes/Cash | | |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Buy | Sell |
| U.S. Dollar | 17.3390 | 17.8027 |
| G.B. Pound | 23.1517 | 23.8223 |
| EURO | 20.2509 | 20.8575 |
| Bank Rate (July 2023) | | 7.50% |
| Prime Rate (July 2023) | | 11% |
| Inflation (July 2023) | | 4.5% |
| Petrol | E20.20/Litre | |
| Diesel | E19.80/Litre | |
| Paraffin | E14.55/Litre | |



Stories By Delisa Magagula

THE Taiwan Technical Mission (TTM) recently conducted a hands-on agricultural training programme in Mkhovu, aimed at equipping local farmers with practical skills in guava and dragon fruit production.

The workshop, attended by 45 farmers from across the region, focused on orchard management, land selection, water security, fencing, and labour organisation.

According to the organisers, the objective was to introduce sustainable farming techniques while improving fruit yields and market access for Eswatini’s smallholder farmers.

“We wanted the farmers to gain real-world experience, not just theory. From choosing the correct soil to setting up drip irrigation, every stage of the orchard process was covered,” said a representative from the Taiwan

Technical Mission.

Participants received step-by-step guidance on how to plan and manage orchards for both guava and dragon fruit.

Trainers also introduced fertilisation schedules, pruning methods, and pest control strategies suited for local environmental conditions.

One of the attendees, Phindile Mamba, said the training provided much-needed clarity on how to approach fruit farming as a business.

“Before this, I had guava trees in my yard but didn’t know how to get the best from them. Now I can organise my orchard properly and hopefully sell to larger markets,” she said.

Guava and dragon fruit training equips local farmers

The session included a practical component where farmers were taken through orchard setup demonstrations using tools and materials supplied by the TTM.

Emphasis was placed on choosing elevated land to prevent flooding, securing clean water sources, and using trellising systems for dragon fruit vines.

According to the TTM, introducing dragon fruit is part of a broader strategy to diversify Eswatini’s agricultural outputs and enter higher-value crop markets.

“Dragon fruit is not just a trend; it is a high-yield crop with potential in regional supermarkets and health food markets,” the representative added.

In addition to the technical farming skills,

the training covered the financial aspects of fruit production. Farmers were encouraged to explore stable, bulk supply contracts with supermarkets as a way of avoiding price fluctuations at local fresh produce markets.

“We explained the value of timing the harvests to peak demand periods,” said the lead agronomist at the training.

TTM said the programme will continue to monitor the participating farmers, offering mentorship and technical support in the coming months.

The mission also plans to scale the training to other regions if funding and local interest permit.



▲ Training on how to grow Dragon Fruit.



▲ Farmers being trained on growing Guava.

NDMA builds homes for over 750 vulnerable citizens

THE National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) has constructed permanent housing for over 750 vulnerable emaSwati and rehabilitated nearly 700 homes across the country as part of its ongoing disaster response and recovery programme.

According to NDMA’s latest report, more than 54,000 people in Eswatini have been affected by natural disasters in the last two years.

The agency has responded by building 158 new houses and rehabilitating 685 damaged structures, prioritising support for widows, elderly citizens, and persons living with disabilities.

“These interventions are not just emergency shelters they are proper homes, built to restore dignity and provide long-term safety,” said NDMA’s Communications Officer, Magaman Mahlalela.

In addition he said they are implementing structured disaster recovery that makes communities more resilient.

One of the beneficiaries, a 63-year-old widow from the Shiselweni region, said receiving a new house has changed her life.

“I used to live in a leaking mud structure with no windows now I sleep peacefully in a safe home. I feel human again,” she said.

The NDMA says its work goes beyond humanitarian relief and forms part of a broader national disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy.

“We are not ticking boxes. We are building safer communities that are better equipped

BEFORE



▲ Before and after pictures of one of the houses constructed by the National Disaster Management Agency.

AFTER



to survive future disasters.” said Mahlalela.

The construction efforts have been carried out with technical oversight from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, while regional administrators helped identify eligible beneficiaries.

Most of the homes built include basic services such as sanitation, rainwater harvesting systems, and secure roofing.

Mahlalela stated that the agency is working to ensure that housing structures are disaster-resilient and comply with safety standards.

“We have learned from past events cli-

mate change is real, and our infrastructure must be ready for it,” he said.

NDMA confirmed that the disaster response programme has been funded through national government allocations and emergency grants from development partners.

The agency says its goal is to reach more affected households before the end of the year, especially in areas impacted by severe weather events and flash floods.

In addition to housing, NDMA has been involved in community awareness programmes, including disaster preparedness training, early warning system rollouts, and

community mapping of high-risk zones.

Regional Development Officer Sipho Simelane said the NDMA’s efforts have reduced displacement in many communities.

“People used to flee during every storm. Now they stay because their homes are safer,” he said.

The agency has urged community leaders to work closely with its field officers to identify households still in need of support.

Mahlalela said plans are underway to develop a national disaster housing database to improve planning and speed up future interventions.

SA rand buoyed by stronger gold prices as U.S. tariffs kick in

SOUTH Africa's commodity-backed currency edged up in early trade on Thursday, supported by a weaker dollar and higher gold prices as investors fled to the safe-haven metal after steep tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump took effect.

At 0750 GMT the rand traded at 17.6850 against the dollar, up roughly 0.5% on Wednesday's close.

"Notwithstanding the tariff uncertainty, the ZAR has clawed back more lost ground. Some of that is due to the USD retreating as traders focus on the rising probability of more rate cuts in the U.S., which will erode any remaining carry trade advantage the USD might enjoy," said ETM Analytics in a note.

U.S. imports from South Africa face a 30% duty, the highest rate among Sub-Saharan African countries. Despite the government's failure to negotiate a better deal, the rand continues to recover, helped partly by

South Africa's status as a major producer of precious metals.

The dollar last traded 0.2% weaker against a basket of currencies.

"In the short term, the ZAR will take advantage of the souring USD sentiment with the USD-ZAR trading back below the 17.8000 mark and will likely appreciate further, especially if SA's terms of trade remain positive and partially help offset any of the trade impact that will surely arise in the coming months," said the note.

The central bank reported on Thursday that net foreign reserves fell to \$65.143 billion at the end of July from \$65.216 billion in June.

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange's Top-40 index was up 0.6%

South Africa's benchmark 2035 government bond was slightly stronger in early deals, with the yield up 2 basis points at 9.655%.

(Reuters)



▲ At 0750 GMT the rand traded at 17.6850 against the dollar, up roughly 0.5% on Wednesday's close.



▲ JPMorgan and Angola agreed in December a \$1 billion, one-year derivative contract known as a total return swap backed by \$1.9 billion in its government dollar bonds.

Angola gets back \$200 mln collateral from JPMorgan after bond rebound

ANGOLA got back \$200 million of collateral in May that it had to post to JPMorgan earlier in the year, the finance ministry said, after the price of its bond rebounded, easing pressure on its finances.

JPMorgan and Angola agreed in December a \$1 billion, one-year derivative contract known as a total return swap backed by \$1.9 billion in its government dollar bonds.

In early April, JPMorgan demanded extra security from the Southern African crude oil exporter after a sharp oil price decline in the wake of tariff turmoil hit the value of Angolan bonds provided as collateral.

"The improvement in the price of Angola's Eurobonds has a positive impact, allowing the amount paid in compliance with the margin call to be returned to the State. This refund has already taken place," the finance ministry told Reuters, adding that it received the cash in May.

JPMorgan declined to comment.

The price of the collateral bond for the loan from JPMorgan fell from 100 cents on the dollar at the end of March to a low of 86 cents during the selloff in early April when the margin call was invoked, before recovering to the March levels.

It was quoted at 100 cents on Wednesday, traders said.

Angola, which is saddled with high external debt to various creditors, including oil-backed loans from China, faces a slowing

growth outlook and violent protests sparked by a fuel price hike on the back of removal of oil subsidies.

The total return swap deal with JPMorgan saw the Wall Street bank provide the government with two financing tranches of \$600 million and \$400 million. The \$1.9 billion freshly issued bonds that provide collateral for the deal did not generate any cash for the country. The bond, which will mature in 2030, is listed internationally and its price is usually quoted in line with movements in the broader market and Angola's other bonds. Total return swaps are seen as complex and risky financing instruments, and are very rarely used in sovereign funding.

Angola's JPMorgan total return swap has added to concerns that heavily indebted, low-rated African countries are increasingly turning to "off-screen" transactions like bank loans, private placements and derivatives which could bring challenges including margin calls and higher interest rates.

Africa's debt has soared to more than \$1.8 trillion, according to data from the African Development Bank, leading to three sovereign debt defaults in the past four years and unconventional financing deals as governments seek to stay afloat.

In Angola, concerns have been growing about falling social spending by the state amid demands for more investments into infrastructure projects like roads.

(Reuters)

Ramaphosa speaks to Trump, trade teams to talk further

SOUTH African President Cyril Ramaphosa held a telephone call with U.S. President Donald Trump on bilateral trade and the two countries' trade negotiating teams will have more detailed talks, Ramaphosa's office said on Thursday.

South Africa tried for months but failed to negotiate a trade deal with Washington

ahead of Trump's deadline. U.S. imports from South Africa now face a 30% duty.

"The two leaders undertook to continue with further engagements, recognising the various trade negotiations the U.S. is currently involved in," Ramaphosa's office said in a statement. "Respective trade negotiating teams will take forward more detailed discussions." (Reuters)



▲ South African President Cyril Ramaphosa held a telephone call with U.S. President Donald Trump.

Global stocks rise; BOE decision lifts pound

Global equities rose on Thursday as upbeat earnings, growing hopes for a ceasefire in Ukraine and expectations for U.S. rate cuts boosted sentiment, while oil prices steadied on news of a meeting between the Russian and U.S. presidents.

Prices of gold, seen as a safe haven in volatile times, touched a two-week high.

MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe rose 0.45% to 937.40. Japanese shares hit a record high.

The Bank of England cut interest rates but four of its nine policymakers, worried about inflation, voted to keep rates unchanged.

The split vote suggested the BoE's run of

rate cuts might be nearing an end. Sterling was up 0.38% after the decision.

"The vote split is clearly a lot more hawkish than I was expecting," said Dominic Bunning, head of G10 FX strategy at Nomura.

Higher U.S. tariffs on imports from dozens of countries kicked in on Thursday, raising the average U.S. import duty to the highest in a century.

Investors largely shook off U.S. President Donald Trump's latest tariff volleys, including an additional 25% levy on U.S. imports from India over purchases of Russian oil and a threatened 100% duty on U.S. imports of chips.

(Reuters)

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday demanded the immediate resignation of new Intel CEO Lip-Bu Tan, calling him “highly conflicted” due to his ties to Chinese firms and raising doubts about plans to turn around the struggling American chip icon.

Reuters reported exclusively in April that Tan invested at least \$200 million in hundreds of Chinese advanced manufacturing and chip firms, some of which were linked to the Chinese military.

Trump’s comments came a day after Reuters was first to report that Republican Senator Tom Cotton had sent a letter to Intel’s board chair with questions about Tan’s ties to Chinese firms and a recent criminal case involving his former firm Cadence Design.

“The CEO of INTEL is highly CONFLICTED and must resign, immediately. There is no other solution to this problem,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, sending Intel shares (INTC.O), opens new tab down nearly 3% in late morning trading.

A leadership change could pile pressure on Intel, which is a pillar of U.S. efforts to boost domestic chipmaking. Last year, it secured \$8 billion in subsidies, the largest outlay under the 2022 CHIPS Act, to build new factories in Ohio and other states.

Trump’s intervention marked a rare instance of a U.S. president publicly calling for a CEO’s ouster and sparked debate among investors.

“It would be setting a very unfortunate precedent. You don’t want American presidents dictating who runs companies, but certainly his opinion has merit and weight,” said Phil Blancato, CEO of Ladenburg Thalmann Asset Management.

David Wagner, head of equity and portfolio manager at Intel shareholder Aptus Capital Advisors, said while “many investors likely believe that President Trump has his hand in too many cookie jars, it’s just another signal that he’s very serious about trying to bring business back to the U.S.”

Intel and Tan, who took over as CEO in March, did not immediately respond to Reuters.

Firefly Aerospace hits \$9.8 billion valuation in Nasdaq debut as shares takeoff



▲ Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump will meet in the coming days.

FIREFLY Aerospace (FLY.O), opens new tab secured a valuation of \$9.84 billion after its shares surged 55.6% in their Nasdaq debut on Thursday, as investors continue to pour capital into companies aiding expansion of the U.S. space and defense program.

The stock opened at \$70 apiece compared with the IPO price of \$45, marking a striking turnaround for a once-beleaguered company now riding high on its lunar business and lucrative military-space prospects.

Firefly, which became the first private enterprise to achieve a successful lunar landing

Trump demands ‘highly conflicted’ Intel CEO resign over China ties



▲ Intel CEO Lip-Bu Tan makes a speech on stage in Taipei, Taiwan.

ters requests for comment.

In response to the Reuters story on Wednesday about a U.S. lawmaker questioning Tan’s ties to China, an Intel spokesperson said the company and its CEO were deeply committed to the national security of the U.S. and the integrity of their role in the U.S. defense ecosystem.

Reuters reported in April that Tan himself, and through venture funds he has founded or operates, invested in Chinese firms including contractors and suppliers for the People’s Liberation Army between March 2012 and December 2024.

The reporting was based on a review of Chinese corporate databases cross-referenced with U.S. and analyst lists of firms with connections to the Chinese military.

Reuters identified 20 investment funds and companies where his venture capital firm Walden is currently a joint owner along with Chinese government funds or state-owned enterprises, according to Chinese corporate records.

The government funds were mostly from municipal governments of Chinese tech hubs like Hangzhou, Hefei and Wuxi.

A source familiar with the matter had at the time told Reuters that Tan had divested his positions in entities in China, without providing further details.

Chinese databases reviewed by Reuters at the time had listed many of his investments as current, and Reuters was at the time unable to establish the extent of his divestitures.

Tan, a Malaysian-born Chinese American

cles for the U.S. Space Force.

U.S. IPOs have picked up pace after tariff-driven volatility hampered listings in April, reigniting a long-awaited recovery of first-time share sales.

“I think we will continue to see strong debuts for large-cap IPOs for the remainder of the year,” said Ross Carmel, partner at law firm Sichenzia Ross Ference Carmel.

Firefly has come a long way from a tumultuous past, including a bankruptcy in 2017 and a CEO ouster last year.

Its bankruptcy led to billionaire Ukrainian investor Max Polyakov’s Noosphere Ventures acquiring a majority stake in the company that, four years later, was forced to be sold to AE Industrial Partners over national security concerns raised by the U.S. government.

Formed in 2014 by Tom Markusic, now its chief technology officer, Firefly started as a launch company centered on its medium-sized, 95-foot-tall Alpha rocket. It has since expanded into spacecraft and lunar lander business to provide mission services for governments and a nascent lunar market.

“The best companies go through hard times and challenges, but the best companies get back up and then continuously improve,” said Kim, who took the helm at Firefly last year after leading the Boeing-owned small satellite firm Millennium Space Systems.

While Houston-based Intuitive Machines (LUNR.O), opens new tab was the first private firm to reach the moon last year, its Odysseus lander made a lopsided touchdown, foiling most of its onboard customers’ mission objectives.

business executive, was also the CEO of Cadence Design (CDNS.O), opens new tab from 2008 through December 2021 during which the chip design software maker sold products to a Chinese military university believed to be involved in simulating nuclear explosions.

Cadence last month agreed to plead guilty and pay more than \$140 million to resolve the U.S. charges over the sales, which Reuters first reported.

“We don’t believe Lip-Bu is ‘conflicted,’ though given the nature of this administration the China ties are seemingly creating an increasingly bad look,” Bernstein analyst Stacy Rasgon said.

“And unfortunately, unlike other tech CEOs Lip-Bu does not appear to have cultivated the kind of personal relationship with Trump that would help to assuage his ire.”

A White House official said, “President Trump remains fully committed to safeguarding our country’s national and economic security. This includes ensuring iconic American companies in cutting-edge sectors are led by men and women who Americans can trust.”

BUSINESS TURMOIL

Once the bedrock of Silicon Valley’s global dominance in chips, Intel in recent years lost its manufacturing edge to Taiwanese rival TSMC.

It also has virtually no presence in the booming market for artificial intelligence chips dominated by Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab and has been losing market share in data centers and personal computer - long its stronghold - to rival AMD.

Intel shares have been nearly flat in 2025, after dropping more than 60% last year. The value has fallen below \$100 billion at a time when Nvidia has become the first \$4 trillion company. (Reuters)

Firefly’s Blue Ghost landed safely on the moon in March, a milestone for a scrappy unit that was once tertiary to other business goals. It was also a breakthrough moment for NASA and its contracting model designed to stimulate private missions to the moon.

“Firefly has already demonstrated responsive launch capabilities and delivered a lunar payload — proof points that matter to the Space Force and NASA,” said Ali Javaheri, emerging technology analyst at PitchBook.

The company had a backlog of roughly \$1.1 billion and more than 30 planned launches under contract as of March 31.

“Investors will likely focus on backlog growth, gross margin trends as production scales, and Firefly’s cash runway post-IPO,” Javaheri said.

The company, however, expects to incur net losses for the next several years, according to filings.

SPACE SCRUTINY

Rising geopolitical tensions and deteriorating international relations have put a spotlight on space and defense contractors, as U.S. President Donald Trump aims to bolster military and civil space programs with the efficiencies of for-profit companies.

Elon Musk’s SpaceX — which has about \$22 billion in government contracts — has grown critical to the global satellite network, potentially managing a crucial element of the “Golden Dome” missile defense shield planned by Trump.

SpaceX’s rapid growth in the space industry and Musk’s latest tensions with Trump, however, have prompted officials to open talks with other rocket and tech manufacturers, (Reuters)

Tunisian president's supporters protest against UGTT union amid rising tensions

HUNDREDS of supporters of Tunisian President Kais Saied staged a rally outside the headquarters of the powerful UGTT union on Thursday and urged Saied to suspend the union following a transport strike last week that paralysed the country.

The rally highlights growing fears among activists and opposition supporters of a possible move by Saied against one of the last major independent organisations in the North African country.

Saied assumed sweeping powers in 2021, shut down the elected parliament, started ruling by decree, suspended the Supreme Judicial Council and sacked dozens of judges in a move the opposition described as a coup.

He said his actions were legal and intended to halt rampant chaos.

The protesters chanted slogans such as "The people want the union to be suspended!" and urged Saied to intervene against what they described as "union gangs".

The UGTT said it was under attack by criminal gangs which it accused of recruiting children to attack its headquarters. Union

spokesman Sami Tahri also said the authorities were behind the protest rally.

Dozens of union members staged a counter-demonstration and shouted anti-government slogans. "The union will remain steadfast and independent," they chanted.

Police were deployed to prevent clashes between the two sides.

The union's leadership will meet soon to decide on further actions, spokesman Tahri said.

Thursday's rally followed a three-day nationwide transport strike led by the UGTT that paralysed land travel across Tunisia and underscored the union's continued ability to mobilise protest in a landscape increasingly dominated by Saied.

Rights groups said that since 2021 the president has moved to dismantle or sideline opposition voices and civil society, opens new tab groups, imprisoned top opposition politicians and tightened control over the judiciary.

The UGTT, which played a key role in Tunisia's post-revolution transition, has remained openly critical of Saied's concentration of power — making it a potential target in what critics describe as an accelerating



▲ Tunisia's President Kais Saied attends his swearing-in ceremony for his second term at the parliament in Tunis, Tunisia.

authoritarian drift.

While the UGTT initially supported Saied's decision to shut down parliament in

2021, it opposed his subsequent measures, describing them as an attempt to entrench one-man rule. (Reuters)

M23 rebel group says no invitation received to Doha peace talks with Congo

THE Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group has not received an invitation to peace talks with the Democratic Republic of Congo scheduled to begin in Doha on Friday, its leader Bertrand Bisimwa told reporters on Thursday. A delay to the start of the talks risks scuppering an ambitious pledge by the two sides to end the fighting in eastern Congo that has killed thousands of people this year and displaced hundreds of thousands more.

M23 rebels seized eastern Congo's largest city Goma in late January as part of a rapid advance that has given them control of more territory than ever before.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has mediated talks between Congo and Rwanda that Washington hopes will produce a sustainable peace and attract billions of dollars of Western investment to a region rich in tantalum, gold, cobalt, copper and lithium.

Rwanda, which has long denied helping M23, says its forces act in self-defence against Congo's army and ethnic Hutu militiamen linked to the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Under a separate but parallel mediation effort hosted by Qatar, Congo and M23 signed a declaration of principles on July 19, opens new tab in which they vowed to start negotiating a peace agreement no later than August 8 with the goal of reaching a deal by August 18.

Bisimwa told Reuters on Thursday, however, that M23 had not received an invitation to Doha and that for now there was no M23 delegation there.

Another rebel leader, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters the group would not go to Doha "until Kinshasa begins to respect the declaration of principles, which provides for the release of our detained members".

An official with knowledge of the matter said there had been a delay in releasing prisoners, but that both sides were still working to implement the terms outlined in the declaration of principles.

"This includes ongoing negotiations to establish a mechanism – with involvement from the International Red Cross – for the exchange of prisoners, which has taken longer than initially anticipated," the official said.

"However, progress is being made, and once there is an agreement on this point, implementation of the deal is expected to pick up pace."

A Congolese government official directly involved in the talks told Reuters that prisoners could only be released after an agreement – rather than the declaration of principles – is signed.

That person said they could not confirm whether Congo would attend the talks.

Tina Salama, spokesperson for Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi, (Reuters)

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 0.1 percentage 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 Mlisi
GOVERNOR



www.centralbank.org.sz



Tougher transshipment penalties not expected immediately as Trump tariffs kick in

TOUGHER U.S. trade penalties on goods originating in one country being re-shipped from another are not expected to immediately follow new U.S. tariffs, three people in Southeast Asia with knowledge of the matter said, easing a major cause of concern.

Southeast Asian countries including Vietnam and Thailand have been explicitly targeted by White House officials for their alleged role in facilitating the so-called transshipment to America of Chinese goods, which would face higher tariffs if shipped directly from China.

The Trump administration imposed tariffs on goods from dozens of countries from Thursday, and in an executive order said products determined to have been illegally rerouted to conceal their country of origin would face additional duties of 40%. But it did not clarify what constitutes transshipment.

U.S. imports from Southeast Asia's biggest economies, which rely heavily on exports, are now subject to tariff rates of about 19%, most of those significantly reduced from earlier threatened rates.

Existing U.S. customs guidance states goods from countries with no free trade agreements with Washington, such as Southeast Asian nations, can be labelled as made in the country where they undergo a "substantial transformation" of components, even if those parts entirely come from another country, such as China.

And with no new U.S. guidance on rules of origin or specification on what transshipment means, some officials in Southeast Asia have told exporters existing rules apply.

That effectively limits cases of transshipment to illegal activities, like the use of forged export certificates or documents ob-



tained illicitly.

"Currently, all exported goods (from Thailand) are subject to a 19% rate because there are no rules on transshipment yet," Arada Fuangtong, head of the Thai Commerce Ministry's foreign trade department, told Reuters on Thursday.

Her message was echoed by U.S. officials in Vietnam who told businessmen the tariff of 20% would apply to Vietnamese goods, even if they are entirely made with Chinese components and only assembled in Vietnam, according to one person familiar with those talks.

Trade consultants have said rules are vague and they have advised clients, even before the new wave of U.S. tariffs, to have at least 40% of local content for their exports to the U.S. That is "to be on the safe side", one of them said.

The U.S. embassy in Vietnam did not immediately reply to a request for comment. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside U.S. working hours.

"Goods defined by U.S. customs as transshipped are subject to 40% duties, but pending any new definition, that's limited to old

definitions," said a Vietnam-based consultant.

Both people declined to be named in order to speak more freely.

CHINA DEPENDENCE

According to the U.S. customs guidance, repackaging does not usually cause a "substantial transformation", but assembly may, depending on the complexity of the operations.

It is unclear if this narrow interpretation of transshipment could be enforced in other countries.

(Reuters)

Kremlin says Putin and Trump will meet soon, Zelenskiy confers with Europeans

VLADIMIR Putin and Donald Trump will meet in the coming days, the Kremlin said on Thursday, as the U.S. president seeks a breakthrough to end the Ukraine war after voicing mounting frustration with his Russian counterpart and threatening him with new sanctions.

The announcement came a day after Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, held three hours of talks with Putin in Moscow.

Trump has threatened new sanctions against Russia and countries that buy its exports from Friday unless Putin agrees to end the 3-1/2 year conflict, the deadliest in Europe since World War Two.

On Wednesday he imposed higher tariffs against India for buying Russian oil and said similar additional duties may follow on China, the other top buyer of Russian crude oil. It was not clear if he would announce further steps once his Friday deadline expires.

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said Russia and the U.S. had agreed to hold a Putin-Trump summit "in the coming days".

ZELENSKIY: EUROPE MUST HAVE A ROLE

Putin, at a meeting with the president of the United Arab Emirates, said the UAE would be an "entirely suitable" venue for the meeting but stopped short of confirming that the Gulf country would be the host.

There has been no summit of U.S. and Russian leaders since Putin and Joe Biden met in Geneva in June 2021. Russia went to war in Ukraine in February 2022, citing threats to its own security and plunging relations into deep crisis. Kyiv and its Western allies cast



▲ Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump will meet in the coming days.

the invasion as an imperial-style land grab.

Trump has moved to mend relations with Russia and try to end the war, although in his public comments he has veered between admiration and sharp criticism of Putin.

Russia's main stock market index MOEX gained as much as 5% on the news, its highest level in two months. The rouble hit a two-week high against the U.S. dollar and China's yuan.

"Russian stocks are soaring. Investors hope that the (Trump-Putin) meeting will be a step towards normalizing the geopolitical situation," Alfa Bank analysts said in a note.

A White House official also said on Wednesday that Trump could meet Putin as

soon as next week.

The New York Times reported that Trump told European leaders during a call on Wednesday that he intended to meet with Putin and then follow up with a trilateral involving the Russian leader and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

Ukraine and European leaders have long held concerns that Trump, who has voiced sympathy with some of Russia's demands, could align with Putin to force a deal on Zelenskiy that would be deeply disadvantageous to Kyiv.

A source familiar with the matter told Reuters that Witkoff took part in Wednesday's call between Trump, Zelenskiy and European leaders and briefed them on some

things that Putin could agree to.

The source added that all the details would become clear at an online meeting of national security advisers expected later on Thursday.

Zelenskiy spoke on Thursday with the leaders of France and Germany and with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and said Europe must be involved in the peace process.

"The war is happening in Europe, and Ukraine is an integral part of Europe - we are already in negotiations on EU accession. Therefore, Europe must be a participant in the relevant processes," he said on X.

He said the war must end with a "dignified peace", and whatever settlement was reached would shape the security landscape of Europe for decades to come. Russia had still not said it was ready for a ceasefire, he added.

Mykola Bielieskov of the National Institute for Strategic Studies in Kyiv said offering Putin a summit with Trump amounted to giving him a reward without getting anything in return. This, he said, gave Russia "the impression of getting out of isolation and talking on an equal footing".

He said the Kremlin "will continue to drag out time, using the very fact of the meetings as proof of openness to negotiations without any concessions".

Zelenskiy said various possible bilateral and trilateral meeting formats had been discussed with Trump.

"Ukraine is not afraid of meetings and expects the same brave approach from the Russian side," he added.

(Reuters)



Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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THIS weekend, the vibrant scene of Eswatini is set to come alive with an array of exciting shows and performances that cater to every taste.

Eswatini Daily News has meticulously curated a profile of the must-see gigs happening around town, ensuring you stay in the loop and make the most of this bustling weekend.

►► **YOUTH REVIVAL
CRUSADE & GATHERING**
When: Weekend
Where: Prince Of Wales Stadium
Fee: Free

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 take place 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 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 objective to foster a sense of community and spiritual growth among the youth.

►► **AFTERWORK CHILLOUT**
When: Friday
Where: Mdzimba View Shisanyama
Fee: E100

South African musician, Eemoh is poised to deliver an unforgettable performance at Mdzimba View Shisanyama. Known for his infectious hit 'Ngishutheni,' Eemoh will headline the Afterwork Chillout event, set for August 8, 2025, alongside the dynamic entertainer Vulela Ma Weekend. This highly anticipated gathering is set to showcase a vibrant lineup, featuring notable artists such as Blaqaace, Sbuda, Castle, Tilungu, Mzoro, and MaWillies, among others. For those eager to experience this musical extravaganza, ticket prices are structured to accommodate a range of preferences. General admission tickets are available for E100 before 9 pm and E150 thereafter. For those seeking a more exclusive experience, VIP tickets are priced at E250 before 9 pm and E300 after the cutoff time. This pricing strategy ensures that fans can enjoy the event at a range of price points, making it accessible to a broad audience.

►► **YOUNG ZESH'S BIRTHDAY PARTY**
When: Saturday
Where: 23:28 Lounge
Fee: E50

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

►► **SGITHA ONE MAN SHOW**
When: Saturday
Where: Zhumiao Lounge
Fee: E30

Zhumiao Lounge is gearing up for an electrifying night as it prepares to host the highly anticipated One Man Show featuring renowned Eswatini DJ Sgitha. Scheduled for Saturday, August 9, 2025, starting at 5 pm, this event promises to be a spectacular showcase of talent and creativity, highlighting Sgitha's evolution as an artist. The One Man Show will not only spotlight Sgitha but will also feature an impressive lineup of supporting acts, including DJ

Chomzin, DJ Mshayi, DJ Phara, and DJ Biggie. These talented DJs are expected to set the stage ablaze, creating an atmosphere filled with vibrant energy and infectious rhythms. Tickets for the event are priced at E30 before 8 pm, increasing to E50 thereafter, making it an accessible outing for music lovers across the region. With the promise of a night filled with unforgettable performances, attendees are encouraged to arrive early to secure their spot and enjoy the full experience.

►► **SHISELWENI ARTS FESTIVAL**
When: Weekend
Where: Nhlangano
Fee: Free

The town of Nhlangano is gearing up for an artistic explosion as the highly anticipated Shiselweni Arts Festival approaches, set to take place on August 8-9, 2025. This cultural extravaganza is set to showcase the rich tapestry of local talent, creativity, and community spirit, culminating in a free Street Festival that will transform the area

in front of the Shoprite Shopping Complex into a lively hub of artistic expression. The festival will kick off on Friday, August 8, with schools from the region participating in a series of drama, dance, and art exhibitions at a local park. This opening day will serve as a platform for young talents to shine, setting the tone for the festivities to come. However, the highlight of the festival is undoubtedly the Street Festival on Saturday, August 9, which will feature a diverse lineup of performances that reflect the cultural richness of the Shiselweni Region. From noon onwards, attendees can expect an afternoon filled with captivating performances across various genres. Maskandi enthusiasts will be treated to the soulful sounds of local artists such as Inkosiyamaphimbo, Shoba lemfene, Amanono Kamakhewuza, Ivunguzane, and Jiza Jiza. Afro Pop fans will also have plenty to enjoy, with performances from rising stars like Callies Khumalo, Bobo Rocboy, King Rosli, Nock Jay, Black J, and Mr. Drip M.



Must-see shows this weekend

‘A Dream (Liphupho)’ set for Emalahleni Film Festival

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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ESWATINI’S cinematic landscape is set to shine as the film ‘A Dream (Liphupho)’ prepares for its debut at the inaugural Emalahleni Film Festival.

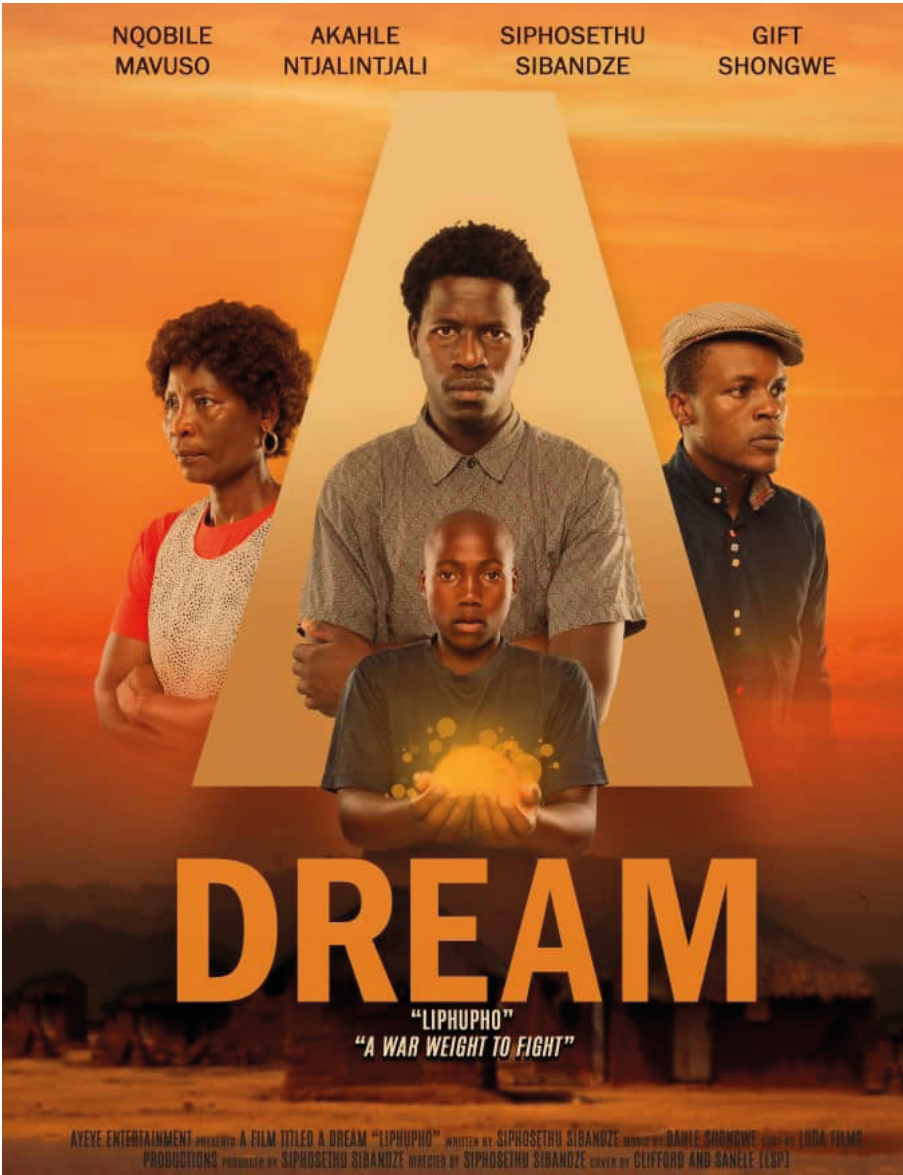
Scheduled to take place from August 7-9, 2025, in Emalahleni, South Africa, this festival will be a significant platform for showcasing diverse narratives and artistic expressions from the region. The announcement that ‘Liphupho (Dream)’ will be officially selected for screening at the festival has been met with enthusiasm from the film’s creators.

The festival organisers expressed their admiration for the film, stating, “We were deeply impressed by your work and believe it will be a fantastic addition to our program, resonating with our audience and contributing to the vibrant cinematic experience we aim to create.”

Director and producer of ‘A Dream (Liphupho),’ Sibandze, shared his sentiments regarding this prestigious selection. “This recognition means the world to us, especially given the film’s previous awards,” he remarked, reflecting on the journey the film has taken to reach this point. The film has garnered attention for its storytelling and the depth of its characters, which are rooted in the cultural experiences of Eswatini.

Sibandze emphasised the significance of being part of the Emalahleni Film Festival, stating that such platforms are essential for filmmakers from smaller nations to showcase their work and connect with broader audiences. “It’s not just about screening a film; it’s about sharing our stories and culture with the world,” he added.

A Dream (Liphupho) stands out for its unique narrative and the authenticity of its characters. The film delves into universal themes such as hope, resilience, and



▲ ‘A Dream (Liphupho)’ film artcover

determination, which resonate deeply with audiences. Through its compelling storyline, the film explores the challenges faced by individuals in their pursuit of dreams, reflecting the struggles and triumphs that many can relate to.

Sibandze believes that the film’s

emotional depth and relatability contribute significantly to its appeal. “We wanted to create a film that connects with viewers on a personal level,” he explained. The characters are portrayed with nuance, allowing audiences to see themselves in their journeys.



▲ DJ Cup.

DJ Cup joins Black Ace lineup in Mozambique

MOZAMBIQUE has become a significant landmark in DJ Cup’s burgeoning career, and the talented Deep House maestro is ready to make an even bigger splash.

Following his impressive debut at the 7th edition of the Standard Bank Luju Food and Lifestyle Festival, DJ Cup is set to take centre stage once again at the highly anticipated Black Ace Show in Maputo. Scheduled for Saturday, August 23, 2025, at South Beach, Maputo, DJ Cup’s performance is slated to begin at 5 pm. This event is set to deliver a thrilling lineup of regional talent and electrifying performances that will resonate with fans of house music.

Joining DJ Cup at the Black Ace Show will be an exciting array of artists, including Sky White from Mozambique, DJ Habias from Angola, and local favourites !Sooks, Double Drop, and DJ V. DJ Cup expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming gig, stating, “I’m looking forward to my set in Mozambique, which has become my second home. The energy and love I receive from there is amazing.”

DJ Cup’s recent performance at the Luju Festival was a watershed moment in his career. Reflecting on the experience, he shared, “Luju was too amazing. The reception was overwhelming, people were with me from the first song to the last. It was inspiring, and now I’m onto the next in Mozambique. It’s going to be epic!”

Breakthrough

The year 2025 has proven to be a breakthrough year for DJ Cup, both locally and regionally. His signing with New Life Records has opened new avenues for his music, and he has hinted at exciting upcoming projects, including cross-border collaborations with top South African DJs. “I’m so honoured to have performed at Luju for the first time. I can’t wait to share more music and connect with even more fans,” he remarked.

DJ Cup’s presence in Mozambique is not limited to performances. Just last month, he graced the stage at the exclusive Italian Elegant Experience in Maputo, sharing the spotlight with international names like Sianageddon from the UK, Oscar Mbo, and Picat Da Italian.

Beyond the booth, DJ Cup holds the position of Operations Director at New Life Entertainment, where he oversees event management, studio recording, artist bookings, and mentorship programs. His extensive experience, spanning over a decade, has seen him perform across Eswatini, South Africa, Tanzania, and Mozambique, allowing him to cultivate a rich network within the music industry.

Xowla for Samu Once Again’s Birthday

SOUTH African talented musician Xowla is set to headline Samu Once Again’s Birthday Celebration.

Scheduled for August 31, 2025, the celebration will take place at Scandza Rest & Bar in Siphofaneni. The lineup for this year’s celebration is impressive, featuring not only Xowla but also South African musician Blaq Major, alongside other notable performers such as Samu Once Again herself, Millano, Zweli Da Vocalist, Lue, and the comedic talents of Gedlembane.

Samu Once Again, the birthday girl and a prominent figure in the local music scene, expressed her excitement about the event. She revealed that the inspiration behind hosting this show was to celebrate her birthday with her fans, emphasising the importance of community and connection in her musical journey. “I want to create a fun-filled event that everyone can enjoy, showcasing the incredible talent we have in our industry. I would like to urge everyone to attend and have some fun with us,” she

stated.

Xowla, often referred to as the ‘Prince of the South African music industry,’ has quickly ascended to fame, captivating audiences with his dynamic performances and enchanting voice. Born in Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, and raised in Malvern East, Xowla’s journey into music began at the tender age of 13. This early start has allowed him to refine his skills as a singer, songwriter, and producer, earning him a reputation as one of the most promising figures in the industry.

His breakthrough moment came with releasing his single ‘Voicemail’ on June 24, 2022. This collaboration with renowned artists Big Zulu, Lwah Ndlunkulu, Mduduzi Ncube, and Siya Ntuli quickly gained popularity, showcasing Xowla’s ability to craft hits that resonate with fans across the nation. Currently signed to Inkabi Records, a label founded by the legendary Big Zulu, Xowla continues to push the boundaries of his artistry.



▲ Xowla.

Young Stunna bemoans not receiving platinum plaques for hit songs

WITH hits like *Adiwele* and *Bopha*, Amapiano sensation Young Stunna, real name Sandile Fortune Msimango, has captivated South Africa.

However, behind the 27-year-old's rise to fame lies a story of grit, growth, and grappling with harsh homophobic labels like "gay" and "Down syndrome boy".

In a candid social media post, the Daveyton-born artist shared his experience of overcoming personal attacks and navigating the challenging landscape of the music industry.

Young Stunna's journey kicked off in Daveyton, where he earned his name as a teen spitting hip-hop rhymes.

By 2012, he'd switched to Amapiano, a move that led to his 2021 debut album, *Notumato*, and collaborations with giants like Kabza De Small and DJ Maphorisa.

Simnandi Records in the firing line

The superstar said he never received his platinum plaques for his hit songs *Baxolele* and *Dlala Captain*, but he only gets royalties for the two.

"There is a lot that we released from Simnandi Records, and when I tried to open up, fans said I must be grateful because they opened doors for me.

"Those songs are so important to me, but I kept quiet and kept pushing. I am healthy now and made peace, choosing forgiveness without anyone apologising," he wrote.

The owner of Simnandi Records, DJ Jaivane, faced similar accusations from other artists like Record L Jones, Slenda Vocals, and Amu Classic & Kappie, who called out the record label for unpaid royalties.

In response to these broader criticisms,

Jaivane took action by settling royalty debts with Record L Jones and Slenda Vocals.

On July 31, he posted on Instagram Stories, saying he was heading to Pretoria to pay the artists. Later, he shared a video confirming the payments and captioned it: "Payment settled, but the mood is awkward, yho."

Choosing to keep silent

Young Stunna added that sometimes it is safe to speak out, but sometimes when people speak, they get silenced and forgotten.

"I fell in love with silence when I got introduced to the music system and business. I am good now," he shared. "I really think the only thing my brothers should do is keep pushing, keep making music, and take those small gigs."

The *Adiwele* hitmaker encouraged artists who have been in the same situation to move forward with the pain.

"Talent is endless; no one is going to take the talent away from you. They can rob you and do whatever they want with your product, but talent remains golden.

"I have been called gay, a Down syndrome boy, etc., but I am still strong. I pray every day for strength, and I will never give up."

(Sunday World)



▲ Young Stunna, real name Sandile Fortune Msimango

Tyla unveils her musical evolution

FRESH off the release of her four-track mixtape "We Wanna Party" and a whirlwind half-year of success, Tyla is showing no signs of slowing down.

The 23-year-old Grammy-winning artist graced the latest cover of "Variety" as one of this year's "Power of Young Hollywood" honourees, and, in her feature interview, she opened up about her next musical chapter.

According to "Variety", Tyla is gearing up to drop a new Amapiano single titled "Chanel" later this year, with her sophomore album expected to follow.

Previously, she celebrated the launch of her "We Wanna Party" mixtape in London and Berlin ahead of its release and revealed songs that would be featured; "Chanel" was one of them, but it ultimately did not make it to the mixtape. She also shed light on the creation of her sophomore album, revealing that it was recorded across various cities, including Los Angeles and Barcelona.

The new body of work sees the South African-born star embracing a global perspective, experimenting with fresh sounds such as rap and reggaeton. "I had more time to work on this album than I did the first, so I have a lot of songs," she said. "It feels really current, and this time, I'm living what I'm singing; it feels way more personal. Way more like me."

The yet-to-be-titled second album is still in progress, with Tyla currently finalising the track list from a growing pool of hits. In July, she gave fans a taste of her evolving sound with "We Wanna Party", a mixtape that includes chart-soaring songs like "Mr. Media", "Dynamite" and "Is It".

Tyla told "Variety" that she wanted to release music that reflected her present moment as an artist, something bold, high-impact and unapologetic. (IOL)

A VIRAL clip from the Open Chats Podcast has ignited widespread condemnation from the DA and the Patriotic Alliance (PA) for its offensive remarks targeting the Coloured community.

The episode, labelled hate speech, sparked calls for accountability and legal action after it first gained popularity on TikTok and was taken down from the podcast's platforms.

In the controversial clip, podcast hosts discussed what they claimed was a "normal" lifestyle within the Coloured community, making inflammatory statements.

"The Coloureds apparently know each other, chief. They show each other those ones," one host, Mthokozisi Mathebula, says in the podcast.

Another host, Sinothando Kama, alleges that Coloured people are "crazy" and have "normalised incest".

DA escalates the matter

The comments have been widely criticised as derogatory and racially inflammatory, with the DA describing the podcast's content as deeply offensive and race-baiting.

In a statement, the DA said such content reduces South Africans to cheap stereotypes for online clout, fans division, and undermines constitutional values of equality and respect.

"This is not humour or harmless commentary; it's a direct attack on the dignity of a community," the DA said in a statement.

The party said it has escalated the matter by lodging a formal complaint with the

'Open Chats' podcasters apologise for racist remarks



▲ 'Open Chats Podcast' hosts Sinothando Kama and Mthokozisi Mathebula have apologised publicly for their offensive remarks.

South African Human Rights Commission, accusing the podcast of promoting hate speech and harmful racial stereotyping.

"This type of public degradation is unacceptable in our society. We cannot allow the normalisation of content that violates the dignity of any group," reads the statement.

PA wants removal of the episode

The PA's leader and Minister of Sport,

Arts, and Culture, Gayton McKenzie, joined in, voicing his indignation and promising to act. "You are going to learn; this is where we draw the line. We are opening a criminal case against them, and we will prepare a referral to the Equality Court," McKenzie stated.

He insisted on knowing where the podcast was recorded.

"We want to know where they record be-

cause we want to see what makes them so comfortable. I am going to find out who the landlord is from where they are renting."

The PA, through its legal representative Eugene Botha of E Botha and Associates, issued a letter to the podcast demanding the episode's removal within 14 days, a public apology to the Coloured community, sensitivity training on racial dignity and apartheid stereotypes, and the permanent deletion of the episode from platforms like YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts.

"Non-compliance will lead to criminal prosecutions, interdicts, damages, and costs," warns the letter.

Podcasters apologise publicly

In response, the podcasters apologised publicly through their attorneys: "We refer to the racist, sexist, unfortunate, irresponsible, reckless, and un-African statements that were made about the Coloured community of South Africa by the Open Chats Podcast, which aired two weeks ago.

"Our clients hereby deeply apologise for the pain and hurt that they have caused to the Coloured community of South Africa.

"Our clients acknowledge unreservedly that the utterances made were inappropriate, sexist, racist, unfortunate, irresponsible, reckless, reminiscent of Apartheid and un-African [contrary to the spirit of ubuntu], and also tantamount to hate speech.

(Sunday World)

EXERCISING can be a difficult task or an enjoyable hobby.

However you look at it, you'll want to make sure you're getting the most out of your workouts. Exercising at the right intensity will make sure you're pushing yourself the right amount. If you're working out for weight loss, you'll want to work out at a higher intensity. That will help you burn more calories.

What Is Cardio?

Cardio, also called aerobic exercise or endurance exercise, has many health benefits. Getting moderate-to-vigorous cardio workouts in each week can add up and help improve your heart health.

Aerobic exercise includes activities like:

- ▶ Brisk walking
- ▶ Swimming
- ▶ Mowing the lawn
- ▶ Jogging
- ▶ Rowing
- ▶ Stair climbing
- ▶ Spinning

Cardio is one of four exercise categories along with strength, balance, and flexibility. Cardio improves your overall fitness, but it's especially crucial for a healthy heart, lungs, and circulatory system. Cardio can improve your health by reducing your risk for diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Ways to Assess Fat Burning

When measuring exercise intensity, you'll consider how you feel and your actual heart rate.

▶ **How do you feel?** The first way to measure the intensity of your workout is by taking note of your perceived exertion. This differs from person to person. What may seem like a difficult run to one person could feel like a simple jog to another. This is a subjective measure of how your workout is going.

▶ **Heart rate.** Measuring the intensity of your workout with your heart rate is a more objective way to look at it. The higher your heart rate while working out, the higher your exercise intensity is. This also means you're more likely to achieve fat burning in your exercises.

▶ **An activity tracker can track your heart rate for fat burning and cardio.** These wrist monitors will help you keep track of your perceived exertion and how that correlates with your heart rate. This will help you get a better idea of when you're actually in a fat-burning state.

What Is a Fat-Burning Heart Rate?

To know your desired target heart rate, you must calculate your maximum heart rate. To do this, start by subtracting your age from 220. For example, if you're 30 years old, subtract 30 from 220 to get a maximum heart rate of 190. This number is the most your heart should beat per minute while you're exercising.

The American Heart Association recommends a target heart rate of 50% to 70% of your maximum heart rate during moderate exercise. They recommend 70% to 85% of your maximum heart rate for vigorous exercise intensity.

You should aim for the lower end of your target heart rate zone if you're starting an

exercise routine. Then, as you condition your body and heart, you can build up your intensity.

Maintaining a moderate-to-vigorous exercise intensity will get you into the fat-burning heart rate zone. As a part of fat loss, strength training helps boost your metabolic rate. This means you'll burn

more calories at rest compared to if you don't work out. A higher metabolic rate helps you burn more calories during the day, even after your workouts.

Fat is burned during every exercise session, so the more you work out, the more you'll see cardiovascular improvements. The amount of fat burned is determined by

your intensity level and duration.

What Is a Cardio Heart Rate?

The more you work out, the more you build stamina, and the more you can push yourself to reach a higher cardio heart rate. This is when your heart rate reaches the

What to Know:
Heart rate for fat-burning vs cardio



aerobic level, which pushes your heart rate toward a higher percentage of your maximum heart rate.

Once you can comfortably reach your cardio heart rate, your heart is getting stronger. Cardio exercise is excellent for your heart and metabolic health. Cardio can help lower your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar.

What's The Difference Between a Fat-Burning Heart Rate Vs. Cardio?

Your different heart rate zones are determined by the percentage of your maximum heart rate. If you're exercising too close to your maximum heart rate, this could place an unhealthy strain on you.

Knowing the difference between fat-burning heart rate and cardio heart rate can help you understand how much you should push yourself in different exercises. Reaching your target heart rate zones more efficiently then helps improve your cardiovascular health.

The different exercise heart rate zones are based on training levels connected to your maximum heart rate. Your heart rate can be broken down into three zones:

► **Lower-intensity zone.** This zone is when you're working at 50% to 60% of your maximum heart rate. In this zone, you're burning fewer calories, but you can sustain this rate for longer.

► **Fat-burning zone.** Also called the temperate zone, you're using 60% to 70% of your maximum heart rate when exercising at this intensity. Typically, about 65% of the calories you burn in this zone are from fat.

► **Aerobic (cardio) zone.** This is the highest level of intensity. You're using about 70% to 80% of your maximum heart rate. At this heart rate, only 45% of your burning calories are fat. However, you're burning more calories than you are in the other two zones. While you're not burning the maximum amount of fat calories, you're improving your overall health. You're likely not able to sustain the aerobic heart rate for long periods of time.

The Takeaway

Your maximum heart rate is only a guide. You may have a higher or lower maximum heart rate. If you want to discover your specific range, you can talk to your doctor or personal trainer about calculating your target heart rate zones. If you're on certain medications intended to lower your blood pressure, your maximum heart rate may also be lowered. Talk to your doctor before starting a vigorous exercise routine.

By being mindful of how you feel and your target heart rate zones, you'll be able to get the most out of your exercises. Make sure you don't push yourself too hard, too fast. Building your stamina and improving your heart health is important for safe workouts.

WebMD



Oysters: Are they good for you?

OYSTERS are a delightful bite of pure ocean flavor, or a slimy salty blob.

There are many opinions on this polarizing seafood. Fans praise oysters as chewy, distinctive, and fresh-flavored.

Evidence of shellfish consumption by humans dates as far back as 164,000 years ago. Fast forward to roughly 2,000 years ago, history shows the Romans in England enjoying this salty seafood.

In America, oysters were considered a cheap food mainly enjoyed by the working class in the early 19th century. They reached their peak from 1880 - 1901 when the United States produced 160 million pounds of oyster meat per year.

Oyster production has died down considerably in the past century, due partly to habitat destruction and a drop in demand. Still, they remain a popular seafood enjoyed by connoisseurs globally.

Nutrition Information

Oysters are commonly eaten raw with a few drops of lemon juice squeezed on them. Their nutritional content is largely unaffected by any cooking or preparation methods.

Six medium sized oysters contain roughly:

- Calories: 50
- Protein: 6 grams
- Fat: 1 gram
- Carbohydrates: 5 grams
- Fiber: 0 grams

Raw oysters are also an abundant source of several vitamins and minerals. They're a particularly good source of vitamin B12, which research has indicated plays a big role in keeping your brain healthy. Other

micronutrients include:

- Vitamin D
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Phosphorus
- Zinc
- Copper
- Manganese
- Selenium
- Potential Health Benefits of Oysters

Oysters are low-calorie and high in micronutrients, making them a healthy food for many people. Many of the specific health benefits of oysters are tied to their abundant array of micronutrients.

Brain Health

The impressive amount of vitamin B12 makes them a natural choice for keeping your brain healthy. A deficiency in vitamin B12 has been associated with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Vitamin B12 deficiency has also been linked to mental health symptoms including depressed and suicidal thoughts.

Osteoporosis

Oysters are a rich source of vitamin D, copper, zinc, and manganese. These micronutrients, in combination with calcium, are thought to be key to slowing or even preventing bone loss in older women due to osteoporosis. Additionally, dietary sources of these minerals are thought to be more effective than supplements.

Preventing Selenium Deficiency

Oysters are a naturally rich source of selenium. Selenium is a mineral that the body needs in very small quantities to function properly. When consumed at too high a level, selenium is toxic, however, a deficiency has been linked to cardiovascular disease, infertility, and cognitive decline.

Potential Health Risks of Oysters

While oysters are a great source of various nutrients, they're not without risks. One especially serious concern is the risk of food poisoning from oysters.

Food Poisoning

Since oysters are most frequently eaten raw, they are especially susceptible to passing on bacterial contamination. One type of bacteria found in oysters — *Vibrio vulnificus* — is linked to a serious illness - even fatalities.

Unfortunately, there's no easy way to tell if the oysters on your plate have been contaminated. Serious symptoms typically appear within 24 to 48 hours after consumption and may include fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and shock.

Those most at risk for serious complications from bacterial contamination are people with cancer, diabetes, and liver disease. Those with alcoholic liver disease may be at particular risk. Anyone, including those without these diseases, should seek medical attention immediately if they develop symptoms of food poisoning after eating raw oysters. WebMD

News In Pictures



▲ President of the Chamber of Deputies Hugo Motta sits in his chair after the end of a protest by allies of former president Jair Bolsonaro that blocked the resumption of sessions after the mid-year recess in protest against the house arrest of Bolsonaro



▲ Apple CEO Tim Cook reacts while U.S. President Donald Trump speaks, as they present Apple's announcement of a \$100 billion investment in U.S. manufacturing, while U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick stand.



▲ A demonstrator blows soap bubbles next to a member of the Buenos Aires police during a weekly protest by retirees after Argentine President Javier Milei vetoed a pension increase and a bill strengthening protections for people with disabilities.



▲ United Airlines planes sit grounded due to a tech outage at Newark Liberty International Airport in Newark, New Jersey.



▲ A migrant woman departs carrying her baby in a caravan from Tapachula, heading toward Oaxaca and Mexico City.



▲ Palestinians run towards parachutes carrying aid packages airdropped over northern Gaza Strip.



▲ People take photographs as the Statue of Liberty is seen at sunset through haze caused by smoke from Canadian wildfires, as viewed from Brooklyn, New York.

Van der Merwe claims emphatic victory for maiden title

JACQUES van der Merwe entered the Betway Big Easy Tour winner's circle in emphatic fashion as he raced to a two-stroke victory over England's Joe Sullivan at CMR Golf Club on Thursday.

Van der Merwe brought a three-stroke lead into the final round after shooting an impressive 63 in round two to take his tournament total to 12-under.

Coming into the final round, the Royal Johannesburg and Kensington Golf Club player knew the challenges that stood before him. The course was especially tough on Thursday, and it showed during the final round.

Van der Merwe's round of three-under 67 – which consisted of seven birdies and two double-bogies – took his total to 15-under and two clear of Sullivan, who was just as impressive in very cold conditions in Roodepoort.

Unfortunately for Sullivan, his effort was not enough to earn him his second win this season.

"I'd been in this situation (in contention) a few times before," noted Van der Merwe after his win. "And I've always struggled.

But last night and this morning, I just prayed, and when I got here this morning, I just told myself to stick to the processes that have led me here, telling myself that 'you're good enough and you can do this'. I believed that I was the best golfer on



▲ Jacques van der Merwe.

this golf course today, and it showed in the end.

"I just went back to basics, and I think that's the most important thing to do. I focused so well on the small stuff that it worked out so well for me."

Van der Merwe admitted, however, that despite it looking like it was an easy win, he was as nervous as they come as he stood over his birdie putt on the last hole.

"I was shaking," he said. "I didn't really make it easy for myself. But when that ball went in, it was just a

massive sigh of relief. My first professional win, and on the Big Easy Tour, it's just insane. I couldn't imagine something better than that."

With his win, Van der Merwe moves to fifth on the Order of Merit. The top 12 players on those rankings will earn their Sunshine Tour cards at the end of the campaign.

The Betway Big Easy Tour is the Sunshine Tour's feeder circuit and enjoys the support of the legendary Ernie Els, among other patrons.

(Supersport)

Refreshed Sinner ready for Cincinnati title defence

WORLD No 1 Jannik Sinner said he had taken the right decision by opting for a long break following his Wimbledon triumph, and the recharged Italian is ready to fire at the Cincinnati Open where he will defend his title.

The 23-year-old lost a marathon French Open final to rival Carlos Alcaraz in June before gaining revenge over the Spaniard at the All England Club last month to secure his fourth Grand Slam title overall and second of a difficult season in which he served a short ban for an inadvertent doping offence.

Sinner opted to prioritise his health following that victory and will return after a near month-long absence from the circuit when he takes to the court over the weekend in Cincinnati after getting a first-

round bye.

"The body and mind need to recover and need to understand what happened," Sinner told reporters in Ohio on Wednesday as he explained his scheduling.

"I'm very happy I took some time off, seeing my family and friends and very important people I have around. In the past, I made some mistakes sometimes, starting too early at times.

"I had conversations with the whole team, trying to understand what's best. When you win big titles, they're very special moments and then you have to leave them."

Sinner sported a protective sleeve on his right elbow when he practised with Christopher Eubanks on Wednesday, sparking concerns that he was still feeling the effects of an injury sustained during his title run at Wimbledon. (Supersport)



▲ World No 1 Jannik Sinner.

Time to move on from South Africa's WTC win

SOUTH Africa's leading paceman Kagiso Rabada says it is time to move on from the euphoria of beating Australia in the World Test Championship final while admitting a belated major trophy success has come as a relief to his team.

Rabada will lead South Africa's attack as they take on Australia in three Twenty20 clashes and three one-day Internationals starting in Darwin on Sunday.

"I think it was special, and I've done so many interviews on that since," Rabada said of South Africa's victory over Australia at Lord's in June.

"I think it's time to move on. I don't think we'll forget about that ever as a team, and South Africa won't ever (forget), but time to move on now," he told a press conference on Thursday.

The five-wicket win in the WTC final followed several frustrating near misses for South Africa in limited-overs World Cups.

"It was kind of like a relief. But the show moves on, and moving toward the T20 World Cup, I guess the approach will be a bit different. Now, you know, there's no fear of anything."

Rabada is relishing a reprisal of the rivalry between Australia and South Africa.

"It's always some hard cricket being played, some good cricket," he said. "Whenever we play Australia, I always feel like they get the best out of us, because they're sort of in our faces. And I guess we like that." Test-capped players Cooper Connolly, Todd Murphy and Nathan McSweeney were also in the



▲ South Africa's leading paceman Kagiso Rabada. 14-man squad.

A separate Australia A squad was named for three one-day games.

"The subcontinent provides many unique challenges and the opportunity to utilise different skills with bat and ball," said Bailey.

"We hope repeated experiences in these conditions will assist players in developing an effective method and understanding of their game for future subcontinent tours."

Konstas made headlines in the Melbourne

Boxing Day test last year when he took on Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah to make a blazing debut 60 with a succession of unorthodox shots. It's nice to get a lead on a challenging surface which is going up and down a bit. A couple of wickets tonight tops it off," said Mitchell.

Mitchell said the nature of the Queens club pitch had surprised the New Zealanders with its tennis ball-type bounce. He said Zimbabwe's fast bowlers, Blessing Muzara-

bani and Tanaka Chivanga had "bowled really well".

Muzarabani and Chivanga took three and two wickets respectively as New Zealand slipped from their overnight 92 for no wicket to 233 for seven in reply to Zimbabwe's first innings total of 149.

They shared a second new ball which became available at 256 for seven -- but they could not dismiss Mitchell or Nathan Smith, who shared a partnership of 54 before Smith was forced to retire hurt with an abdominal injury after scoring a dogged 22 off 79 balls.

"We were just trying to take it ball by ball and over by over," said Mitchell.

"We recognised that runs on that surface are going to be pretty valuable at the back end of the game. I thought the way he (Smith) gutted it out was awesome. The injury was niggly but the way he hung in there and stuck it out for a few overs, he should be very proud."

Smith did not field when Zimbabwe started their second innings, which suggested the injury could prevent him from bowling on Friday.

Mitchell was last man out after facing 119 balls and hitting five fours and a six.

Faced with just under an hour to bat until the close, Zimbabwe made a promising start, with Brian Bennett and Ben Curran putting on 25 for the first wicket.

He lasted one more test before being jet-tisoned, only to win back his place for the West Indies test series in June-July.

(Supersport)

A new chapter in South African football began on Thursday as Orlando Pirates Football Club unveiled Amstel Lager as their new official beer partner, signaling a refreshing shift in taste, tone, and tradition for the game.

The merging of two icons of South African culture sees Pirates raise a glass to a partner whose values mirror their own: quality, unity, and loyalty.

“This is more than a sponsorship, it’s a celebration of the people and connections that define South African football. Amstel’s focus on quality friendships and authentic fan connection aligns seamlessly with Pirates’ history, heritage, and future.

“This partnership reflects a new era rooted in mutual respect and a shared belief in quality over compromise,” said Sindi Khumalo-Sibisi, Orlando Pirates Marketing Manager.

The partnership will come to life through a series of fan-focused experiences, both in-stadium and beyond, all designed to elevate matchday into a celebration of connection, passion, and pride.

“At Amstel, we’ve always recognised quality, and Orlando Pirates embody that. They’re more than a football team; they’re a symbol of legacy and leadership.

We believe great beer brings people together, but it’s great friendships that make those moments last.

“This announcement signals a changing landscape in local football, one where fans are ready for something meaningful. We’re



Pirates sign in a new era with Amstel Lager

here to build a real bond, with the club, and with the fans,” added Andrea Quaye, Heineken Beverages Marketing Director.

Club legend Happy Jele concluded, “At Pi-

rates, doing things the right way has always mattered, how we play, how we carry ourselves, how we connect.

“This partnership with Amstel isn’t just

about beer, it’s about belief. Belief in legacy, belief in quality, and belief in unity. That’s what makes it special.”

(Supersport)

Colapinto reportedly OK after crashing in F1 tyre test

ARGENTINE racer Franco Colapinto crashed in Formula One tyre testing at the Hungarian Grand Prix circuit on Wednesday and was reportedly unhurt after being taken to the medical centre, his Alpine team said.

Renault-owned Alpine, Ferrari, McLaren and Racing Bulls are taking part in the two-day Pirelli test at the Hungaroring that followed on from last weekend’s grand prix, the last before the sport’s August break.

Alpine said in a statement that Colapinto, who took over from reserve driver Paul Aron for the final day, had “an incident” at turn 11, a right-handed curve that can be taken at 220kph.

“Franco was assessed on site at the medical centre and is okay,” they added. “Eventually... we’ll just sit down and actually have a conversation and go ‘right, one of you is going to win and it’s going to be the best day of your life. One of you is going to lose. How do you want us to handle that?’” he told a select group of reporters.

“We’ll actually sit down and go ‘Right, you want us to jump up and down and celebrate? This guy won’. So we’re fully aware and sensitive to ‘how do you celebrate that situation?’”

Australian Piastri has won six races to Norris’s five but the Briton has momentum going into the August break, with three wins from his last four starts.

The pair have had seven one-two finishes from 14 races, including the last four, and have left rivals trailing. McLaren are so far ahead in the constructors’ standings – 299 points



▲ Argentine racer Franco Colapinto. over Ferrari – that the crown is a given.

The team gave no details about how the crash happened or damage to the car.

Colapinto, 22, replaced Australian Jack Doohan at Alpine after the first six races but has yet to finish higher than 13th for the team in seven starts.

He did not start in Britain, after crashing in qualifying and then suffering a gearbox issue, and there has been speculation he could also be replaced before the end of the season.

Teammate Pierre Gasly has scored all of last-placed Alpine’s 20 points,

with three scoring finishes in his last six races.

Colapinto told reporters last week that he was lacking confidence in the car and struggling to turn into the corners in the way he would like.

“I didn’t have this issue last year (in nine races for Williams), I could go straight in and be quick straight away. Now I’m struggling a bit more with that,” he said.

“Generally the car is a bit tricky on entries and that’s what we are working on, on my side.”

(Supersport)

Pirates look to avoid stumbling start against Sekhukhune

ORLANDO Pirates will host Sekhukhune United in their opening game of the 2025/26 Betway Premiership season at the Orlando Stadium in Soweto on Saturday.

CURRENT FORM

Pirates dispatched Polokwane City 2-0 at Orlando Stadium in their MTN8 quarterfinal last Saturday. New signing Oswin Appolis scored against his former club and earned the penalty, which Patrick Maswanganyi slotted to double the lead.

New Buccaneers head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou will hope to start his first full Betway Premiership campaign in similar fashion.

Sekhukhune United also ad-

vanced to the MTN8 semifinals after a 3-2 comeback victory against TS Galaxy at the Peter Mokaba Stadium last Saturday. New addition Bradley Grobler proved his worth, scoring a brace to draw his side level before Vusumuzi Mncube bagged the eventual winner in the 69th minute.

Babina Noko will look to keep their momentum rolling into the Betway Premiership’s opening weekend as the club aims for a top-three finish and a spot in the Caf Confederations Cup.

WHAT WAS SAID

After his first official game in charge of the Buccaneers, head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou said he was aware of the pressure that comes with the job of Bucs boss.(Supersport)



▲ Orlando Pirates head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou.



▲ The number one PRO AM team in the ongoing FNB Eswatini golf challenge.



▲ The PRO AM runner up with their prizes.

More winners in FNB client PRO-AM

Stories by Chris Dlamini

THE second day of the FNB Eswatini client PRO-AM was just as charged as the first. The bank's clients formed teams that included the main tournament, FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025, players joining them. This was at the Ezulwini Golf and Country

Club's greens. Golf was the order of the day with valuable prizes given away to the top three. The first PRO-AM took off on Tuesday and had its own winners. FNB Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thokozani 'TK' Dlamini was part of the fun, alongside other dignitaries, including former Premier, Cleopas Dlamini. The latter is a golf enthusiast and player. Meanwhile, the position one winners on Wednesday was a team comprising JJ, Frans Straus, Grant Litslef, and Gordon Bennett.

Coming second was a team led by Jaco A, Babsy Mavuso, Kevin Zwane, and Roger Kunene on 90 points, one less than 91 by the champions. Taking the third spot was team Colin Hood, Hanco Rudolph, and Rudi Rudolph. They scored 89 points. The full scores, including the nearest to pin and longest drive, are listed in the article. **Top 3 winners:** 1. JJ, Frans Straus, Grant Litslef, and Gor-

don Bennett - 91 points
2. Jaco A, Babsy Mavuso, Kevin Zwane, and Roger Kunene - 90 points
3. Colin Hood, Hanco Rudolph and Rudi Rudolph - 89 points
Nearest pin 3 - Babsy Mavuso
Nearest pin 6 - Tony Isavwa
Nearest pin 14 - Gordon Bennett
Nearest pin 16 - Mduduzi Dlamini
Longest drive 7 - Vusi G Dlamini
Longest drive 17 - Khulile Dlamini



E2mIn FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025 tees off

THE battle for a share of the E2 million prize package is officially on at the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club's greens. This is at the Royal Swazi Sun Hotel in Ezulwini, where the fourth edition is hosted after Nkonyeni Golf Estate held the previous three. A field of 120 professional golfers is in it, as of 6am on Thursday when the first tee-off took place. The Challenge, implmented by Sunshine Tour, has attracted golfers from around the globe, some from Greece, Scotland, Korea, Chile, Sweden, Australia, Indonesia, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, and Botswana, among others.

Among these golfers are local professionals who got 12 invite spots but went through Pre-Qualifiers to earn the spots. Furthermore, two previous champions from South Africa (SA), Jaco Prinsloo, and Peter Karmis, who won the 2022 and 2023 editions. Missing this term is last year's champion, Daniel van Tonder, a South African also but is committed in Europe where he plays full-time now. The prize at stake for this year's winner is E317 000, an equivalent of over US\$17 000. The two ex-champions will still face competition from last year's King's Cup Golf champion Keenan Davids, who is part of the Challenge.

Symbolic Masters jacket for champ – FNB CEO

IT will not only be about the money for this year's FNB Eswatini Challenge winner. Yes, E317 000 is at stake for the overall tournament winner. However, tournament sponsor FNB Eswatini, through its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thokozani 'TK' Dlamini, announced on Wednesday that there was an extra piece to the money. Dlamini announced the champion will also don a symbolic Masters jacket designed by a local, Mzameni Mpanza of Sgonian Re-

publik. "We have no doubt that this symbolic jacket will become an icon and epitome of FNB Eswatini Challenge for years to come," he said. Meanwhile, the Challenge will run over three days between Thursday (August 7), Friday (August 8), and Saturday (August 9). The winners will be decided and announced on Saturday in an awards ceremony to be honoured by Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Minister Bongani Nzima.



▲ Babsy Mavuso won the nearest to the pin category.

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela
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MSUNDUZA will come to a standstill on Sunday as four regional teams will battle for E5 000 first prize money during the DiskiBet Knockout, Mbabane Finals.

This follows the semifinals draw conducted at Sigwaca House, which will see Eveni Cosmos take on Amabhubesi. Nkwalini will take on Mphalati Dribbling Stars.

DiskiBet Marketing and Communications Manager Thuthu Mbingo said they are pleased to partner with the Hhohho Regional Football Association (HRFA).

“We are happy with our partnership with HRFA and looking forward to an exciting competition on Sunday. We hope fans will be at their best behaviour and have a violence free event on the day,” she said.

Mbingo was accompanied by Marketing Officer Lethokuhle Masilela.

Meanwhile, HRFA executive member Ntokozo Tsela said they are happy with the progress of the tournament.

“We are excited that the tournament has reached the semifinal stage. We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which contributes towards the development of the sport in the region,”he said.

All set for DiskiBet Mbabane semifinals



▲ DiskiBet , HRFA officials and players during the draw of the Mbabane tournament held at Sigwaca House.

Tennis national team eyeing regional glory

THE Tennis juniors’ national team is eyeing glory in the 2025 Southern African Tennis Junior championships. This was revealed by the squad coach, Njabulo Mbhamali, ahead of the squad’s trip to Mozambique on Friday.

Mbhamali will lead the three-member squad to the annual regional championships set for Maputo between August 9-10, 2025.

The national team comprises of three youngsters, Mnotfo Sacolo,Zizwe Mohapi, and Joshan Eziebo.

The three players were selected during

a recent selection tournament held at the Olymp Africa Centre.

“We look forward to the competition and our main comprises and our is to reach the semifinals. I am confident that the boys will perform well during the international assignment,” he said.

The Coach also thanked the sponsor, Swaziland Building Society, for supporting their programs. “We are grateful to the support of the sponsor, which contributes towards the development of the sport in the country,” he said.



▲The tennis juniors national team.



▲Mater Dolorosa basketball teams celebrating their sucesss during the Basketball Association schools championships.

30 players basketball players for COSASSA Games

A total of 30 players will be selected for the basketball Under 20 national team to represent the country in the 2025 Confederation of Southern African Schools Sports Association (COSSASA) games.

Basketball will have a mixed national team that will represent the country in the annual regional Schools championships, which are scheduled before the end of the month.

The players will be selected during the ongoing selection tournament conducted by Basketball Eswatini at Coronation Park.

BASE Secretary Philile Simelane confirmed the latest news when reached for comment.

“We are in the process of selecting the junior national team, and we will have boys and girls’ team. We urge players to attend the trials in numbers so that they can be part of the national team,” she said.

Simelane further revealed that they will hold

training camp for the two squads later this month.

“We will have camps for the players so that the coaches can assess the youngsters. We are happy with the number of players in the ongoing trials,” she said.

Other disciplines for the COSASSA games include soccer, Athletics, Netball, and Volleyball.

“We are in the process of selecting the junior national team, and we will have boys and girls’ team. We urge players to attend the trials in numbers so that they can be part of the national team”

Highlanders AM chops 7

By Sibusiso Masilela
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MBABANE Highlanders AM FC has begun its massive clear-out. The capital city giants released close to 10 ten players from their ongoing preseason camp in Pietermaritzburg as exclusively revealed by this publication.

The released players include Sihle ‘Mh-halaza’ Mkhonta, Wandile Ntshakala, Muh-le Siyaya, Sibahle Sukati, Innocent Dlamini, Melusi ‘Mega’ Magagula, and goalkeeper Bhekisisa Sikhondze, among others.

These players have been deemed surplus to requirements by the Ernest Mavuso-led technical bench.

Dlamini, Magagula, and Sikhondze were hoping to win contracts at the crowd pull-ers following the takeover by South Afri-can businesswoman Shauwn Mkhize as the club’s new president.

A source close to the matter revealed that the players left the camp and the released players are already in the country.

“About ten players were released from the camp and travelled to Eswatini. More play-ers will be released soon as the management conclude talks with some of the targeted new signings,” the source said.

Mkhize said they would make announce-ments of the team during the gathering slat-ed for August 23, 2025.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders AM FC has begun its massive clear-out.

“We will share the latest team develop-ments, including new players and coaches, during our gathering on August 23, 2025,” she said.

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

The team recently featured in a friend-ly match against newly promoted Motsepe Foundation Midlands Wanderers.

The crowd pullers’ technical bench is headed by former Green Mamba coach Ernest Mavuso.

Mavuso is assisted by Former Amazulu FC

development coach Ronnie Moroka.

The team’s legends Phumuza Ntshangase and Sifiso ‘ Barnes ‘ Mkhulisi are also part of the technical bench.

Legendary former goalkeeper Sipho ‘ Shil-ton ‘ Dube will join the team before the end of the week as goalkeeper coach.

Nsingizini, Leopard CAF draw Saturday

By Chris Dlamini

WHO will it be for Nsingizini Hotspurs and Royal Leopard in the CAF interclub competi-tions?

Surely, Nsingizini Hotspurs, tar-geting the group stage in the To-talEnergies CAF Champions League 2025/26, a draw against South Afri-ca rivals, including Mamelodi Sun-downs is not preferred.

The draw is on Saturday, August 12, in Dar er Salaam for the first time ever. Both Nsingizini and Royal Leopard will be standing for Eswati-ni, the latter in the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup, after win-ning the Ingwenyama Cup 2024/25 title, while Nsingizini lifted their first-ever league title.

It has been officially confirmed by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) that all teams that qualified and registered their partic-ipation will know their preliminary



▲ Leopard players celebrating a goal.

round opponents on Saturday, with the draw scheduled for 10am GMT, 12pm domestically.

Whether these two teams achieve their group stage target or not, will all start with knowing their rivals for the home and away preliminary round fixtures.

The first preliminary fixtures are scheduled to kick off on September 19, 2025, followed by the Second Preliminary Round starting on Oc-tober 17, 2025.

The group stage of both the To-talEnergies CAF Champions League

and TotalEnergies CAF Confedera-tion Cup will begin on November 21, 2025, with the knockout phase set to commence on March 13, 2026.

Meanwhile, both Nsingizini and Leopard have declared their target to reach the group stage as that’s where the real money is. This is amid the guaranteed close to E1 million for being in the preliminary round from CAF. For the group stage, Nsingizini is looking at US\$700 000 (E12, 432,980.00), while Leopard’s prize for the group stage is at US\$400 000 (E7, 104, 560.00)



Logarusic to blend Sihlangu squad

By Sibusiso Masilela
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SIHLANGU head Coach Zdravko Logarusic is plan-ning to include a mix of ex-perienced and young players in the squad for the upcom-ing 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifi-ers against Cameroon and Libya.

The national team will play away matches, having previ-ously played a goalless draw against Cameroon and lost by 2-0 to Libya at the Mbombela Stadium, which was home matches for the senior national team.

Logarusic revealed the news ahead of the resumption of the World Cup qualifiers.

“I will choose a blend of expe-rience and youth for the qualifi-

ers,” he said.

The players are in pre-season, with the 8-Bet Trade Fair Cup set to start on August 30, 2025.

Logarusic also praised the efforts of local clubs in condi-tioning players for the upcoming season, recognizing the impor-tance of pre-season preparation for the football clubs.

The coach is currently in Cro-atia but will return to Eswatini next week to prepare the team.

He aims to announce the squad by the end of the third week of the month to allow for at least a week-long camp before the matches.

The nation’s pride is sitting at the bottom of Group D in the qualifiers before the next two fixtures.

The next FIFA world cup fi-nals will be jointly hosted by the United States of America (USA), Canada, and Mexico.



▲ Nsingizini players celebrating winning the league.



**Bucs sign in
new era with
Amstel Lager**

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**Logarusic to
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Eswatini
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Highlanders
AM chops 7!

...The massive clear-out at Mbabane Highlanders AM has begun with seven players released from the ongoing preseason camp in Pietermaritzburg. More players will be released as clear out continues at Capital City giants. *Page 23*