

**By Thokozani Mazibuko**

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▲ *Pastor Machawe Sibandze.*

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## Let's Glam You Up

## Party & Home Essentials



## A collage of various personal care products. On the left, there is a white jar of 'REPAIR &amp; REHYDRATE MASK' and a box of 'REPAIR &amp; REHYDRATE MASK' with a close-up of a face. In the center, there are three tubes of 'REPAIR &amp; REHYDRATE MASK' in different colors (pink, yellow, and blue) and a box of 'REPAIR &amp; REHYDRATE MASK'. On the right, there are several hairbrushes and hair ties. The hairbrushes include a purple one, a black one, and a silver one. The hair ties are in various colors (pink, yellow, blue, green, and black) and styles (some with bows, some with rings).



## Party & home essentials



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# JV Mazibuko replaced at Mbabane Alliance Church

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Mbabane Alliance Church has appointed Machawe Sibandze as its stand-in pastor for the next 12 months, following the retirement of long-serving Reverend Johannes Mazibuko.

The announcement was made during Sunday's service, marking the beginning of a transitional period as the church embarks on the process of appointing a substantive pastor.

Sibandze, who has been a dedicated member of the church and has served in various leadership capacities, will oversee the spiritual guidance, pastoral care, and administrative duties of the congregation during his tenure.

Church elders expressed confidence in Sibandze's ability to shepherd the flock through this period of change. "We are grateful to God for providing us with a capable and committed leader to take the pulpit during this important time," a church representative said.

Reverend Mazibuko, who retired after decades of faithful service, leaves behind a legacy of strong leadership and unwavering dedication to the growth of the Mbabane Alliance Church. Congregants paid tribute to his years of ministry and wished him well in his retirement.

Sibandze's appointment is expected to ensure continuity in the church's mission and activities while preparations for a permanent pastor are underway.

... Machawe Sibandze temporarily replaces retired cleric



▲ The new Pastor at Mbabane Alliance Church, Machawe Sibandze seated with his wife after accepting the appointment on Sunday.

By Thokozani Mazibuko

A NANNY has been arrested for allegedly kidnapping and holding her employer's child for a ransom.

Information sourced from reliable sources close to the matter was that the nanny, whose name is known to this publication but will be withheld for ethical reasons, has been officially charged with extortion and the contravention of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act.

The sources alleged that the nanny, who was arrested by Manzini police, allegedly went to the school of her employer's child and waited for the minor to knock off.

Thereafter, she is alleged to have quietly walked away with the child, who did not show any signs of being uncomfortable, since she was used to the nanny in question, resulting in the teachers at the school situated in the Manzini region, not suspecting any foul play.

Trouble began when the minor failed to report home from school at the normal time, prompting her parents to become suspicious that something bad might have befall-

## Nanny arrested for kidnapping employer's child

en her. As a result, the parents allegedly contacted the teachers at the child's school, who told them that the minor was fetched by a certain lady from school that fateful afternoon.

After the teachers had allegedly given the parents a vivid description of how the woman who fetched the minor from school looked like, it then dawned on them (parents) that their nanny might have been the one who took the child.

As a result, the parents are alleged to have contacted the nanny and asked her if she knew the child's whereabouts and to their relief, she responded to the affirmative.

Their joy was, however, short-lived after learning that the nanny was demanding a certain amount of money in exchange for freeing the child.



The money that the nanny was allegedly demanding from the children's parents was allegedly in relation to her unpaid salary.

"The nanny claimed that she kidnapped the child following her employer's failure to pay her salary, and therefore, she demanded that the minor's parents should pay her, her salary first before she could release the child," alleged the sources.

However, instead of paying her the money that she was demanding from them, the par-

ents are alleged to have contacted the police, who subsequently tracked down and arrested the suspect.

The Chief Police Information and Communication Officer (PICO) Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati confirmed the arrest.

She confirmed that a woman was arrested in connection with kidnapping and extortion after abducting a minor and later demanded a ransom from the child's parents.



▲ Chief Police Information and Communication Officer (PICO) Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati.



# Eswatini takes centre stage at the SADC meeting of Finance Committee

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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ESWATINI has recently taken a prominent role in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) by participating in the SADC Meeting of the Finance Committee. This engagement was a significant step towards advancing national development priorities while contributing to the broader goals of regional growth and development. The Eswatini delegation, led by Thab'sile Mlangeni, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, actively collaborated with other member states to foster discussions centred on economic planning and development. The SADC, which comprises 16 member states, aims to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through regional integration. The RISDP serves as a blueprint for achieving these objectives, outlining strategic priorities for the region from 2020 to 2030. Eswatini's involvement in this meeting underscores its commitment



▲ The Eswatini delegation at the SADC meeting of Finance committee.

ment to aligning national policies with regional strategies, thereby enhancing its contributions to SADC's collective vision.

The significance of Eswatini's participation is further amplified by the upcoming 45th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, scheduled for 17 August 2025 at the Ivato Conference Centre in Antananarivo, Madagascar. This summit marks a historic milestone for Madagascar, celebrating its 20th anniversary as a member state of SADC since joining in August 2005. The theme for this summit, "Advancing Industrialisation, Agricultural Transformation,

and Energy Transition for a Resilient SADC," reflects the urgent need for member states to accelerate regional integration through key economic pillars. Key areas of focus during the summit will include strengthening industrial capacity and regional value chains, modernising agriculture, and promoting an inclusive energy transition. These initiatives are vital for building a resilient, sustainable, and cohesive SADC region capable of addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, economic disparities, and energy deficits. The summit will also provide a platform for member states to review progress on

the implementation of the RISDP and assess achievements under the previous summit's theme, "Promoting Innovation to Unlock Opportunities for Sustained Economic Growth and Development towards an Industrialised SADC." During this pivotal gathering, His Excellency Mr. Andry Rajoelina, President of Madagascar, will officially assume the chairpersonship of SADC, succeeding His Excellency Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, President of Zimbabwe. This transition in leadership is expected to bring new perspectives and strategies to the forefront of SADC's agenda, particularly in the context of industrialisation and agricultural transformation. The outcomes of the summit will be crucial in shaping the future direction of SADC. As member states come together to share insights and best practices, the collective commitment to regional integration and development will be tested. Eswatini's proactive engagement in these discussions is indicative of its strategic vision to not only enhance its national development but also contribute meaningfully to the regional agenda.

## Manzini Municipality launches a job preparedness project

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

IN a bid to curb the high rate of unemployment amongst young people, the Municipal Council of Manzini has launched a job preparedness project for the youth of Manzini as part of the commemoration of the International Youth Day 2025.

The project was launched on Friday at the Municipal Council Chambers.

The municipality celebrated this year's International Youth Day under the theme "Localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," with much emphasis on SGD Goal 8, which focuses on creating quality jobs, promoting entrepreneurship, and fostering economic growth.

The commemoration focused mostly on job preparedness as the youth was trained on how to create vision boards, Curriculum Vitae (CV) writing, interview illustrations and how to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to search for jobs.

When explaining the job preparedness project for the youth of Manzini, Tive Nxumalo, the Municipal Council of Manzini Acting Chief City Planner, said they partnered with local companies to have them attach the youth for a period of not more than three months.

She pointed out that the companies that they have patterned with include amongst others, Cardo Capital, EGIS Group, Asante Guest House and The Gorge Hotel to name just a few.

Nxumalo highlighted that the Municipal Council of Manzini will have 10 young people enrolling in the municipality as part



▲ The stakeholders present pose for a group picture during the event.

of the project.

She mentioned that other companies have shown interest in as far as being part of the project was concerned, but they were still yet to formally confirm their participation.

Nxumalo highlighted that by the end of this month, they would have advertised all the available posts in the various companies they have partnered with as well as the skills required.

"The programme is open to every young person who is not above 35 years. The participants will be required to provide proof that indeed they are residents of Manzini," she said.

She mentioned that however, those who attended the event on Friday will be given first preference during enrolment.

Nxumalo pointed out that the youth will apply for the programme via the municipality.

She mentioned that some of the companies will provide stipends to the young people who will be attached in their establishments, while others will not do so.

As a result, she urged the youth to be patient and persistent enough, whether or not they were receiving the stipends as the project was meant to open doors for them, since through the invaluable experience they will obtain during the project, they will be in a better position to be employed.

Meanwhile, Lucky Sithole, a lecturer at Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP) allayed fears amongst the young people, who had the perception that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been introduced to steal their jobs.

He pointed out that AI will not in any way steal people's jobs but rather it will replace certain aspects of the production chain but not the entire job.

He therefore, urged the youth to utilise AI when drafting their CV's and application letters.

Sithole mentioned that 75 per cent of job seekers were now using AI to apply for jobs.

He highlighted that statistics have proven that 78 per cent of those who applied for jobs using AI were employed, whereas only 48 per cent of those who applied for same (jobs) without using AI were employed.

"You must therefore, apply for jobs using AI tool such as Jobscan," he said.

Furthermore, he urged the youth to use social media to advertise their skills as





# Woman dies after falling from avocado tree

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

A 30-year-old woman of Mozambican origin died instantly after falling from an avocado tree in Mbikwakhe on Sunday morning. Chief Police Information and Communication Officer Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati confirmed the incident, stating that it occurred at around 10:00 a.m. on August 10, 2025. Reports indicate that the woman had

climbed the tree to pick avocados when she slipped and fell to the ground. Emergency responders who arrived at the scene found that she had already succumbed to her injuries. Vilakati described the incident as a tragic accident and urged members of the public to take caution when engaging in activities that involve climbing trees or working at heights. Police are continuing to gather more details from witnesses to establish the full circumstances of the accident. The woman's name is being withheld until her family has been officially notified.

# Young man found dead in dagga field

A 22-year-old man from Ngowane has died after reportedly complaining of chest pains before collapsing in a dagga field on Sunday afternoon. Chief Police Information and Communication Officer Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati confirmed the incident, stating that it occurred at around 12:56 p.m. on August 10, 2025. According to police, the man was found lying motionless in the field by community members, who quickly arranged for him to be taken to Piggs Peak Government Hospital. Unfortunately, he was certified dead

upon arrival. The cause of death has not yet been determined, and police say investigations are underway. Authorities are expected to conduct a post-mortem examination to establish the exact circumstances. Vilakati urged members of the public to seek immediate medical attention when experiencing severe or unusual symptoms such as chest pain, which can be an early warning sign of serious health complications. The man's name has been withheld pending notification of his family.



# Man arrested for insulting cops

A MAN has been arrested for insulting and further deflating a tyre of a police van in a bid to prevent the law enforcers from impounding his friend's car after it was involved in a hit-and-run accident. This resulted in Siphamandla Mamba (24) of Mbekweleni area being charged with two counts of contravening the Road Traffic Act 6 of 2007; namely refusing to comply with police instruction to move away from a motor vehicle which was being impounded by the police, insulting police officers and further deflating a tyre of their motor vehicle. Mamba, who appeared before Magistrate Sihle Dlodlu at the Manzini Magistrates Court, committed both offences on July 26 at Ludzeludze Mfolozi Complex. According to statements recorded and submitted before the court, the police spotted the said motor vehicle parked at Mfolozi

Complex and prepared to impound it since they had been searching for it after it was involved in a hit-and-run accident. However, Mamba, who was near the motor vehicle in question, quickly rushed to stand in front of the car and refused to move away even after being instructed to do so by the law enforcers. He is said to have further insulted the law enforcers before deflating the tyre of the police van in a bid to ensure that they abort their mission of impounding his friend's car. Mamba pleaded guilty to the offences and was found guilty as per his own plea. He pleaded for a lenient sentence because he was apologetic for committing the offence. He was sentenced to two years in prison with an option of a fine of E2 000 on the first count, while on the second count, he was sentenced to two years imprisonment without an option of a fine.



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# Truck driver found guilty of stealing sausage pie-rolls

By Thokozani Mazibuko

A TRUCK driver who was employed by Southern Trading Company has been arrested for stealing three boxes of sausage pie rolls worth E600 from his employer.

This resulted in Mandla Pholile (37) from the Matsapha area appearing before Magistrate Philisiwe Simelane at the Manzini Magistrates Court, charged with Theft.

He is said to have committed the offence on June 28, 2025, near St. Theresa High School. When leading evidence before court in order to prove the commission of the offence, the investigating officer who was only identified as Constable Gama, told the court that Pholile stole three boxes of the sausage pie rolls he was entrusted by his employer to deliver at a certain establishment and sold them to Thulani Khumalo, who upon being contacted by law enforcers, handed them over to the Manzini Police Station.

Pholile pleaded guilty to the offence. The Crown, Phila Matsenjwa, submitted that Pholile should be found guilty of committing the said offence. This, he said, was because stealing from an employer was a very



serious offence which attracted a custodial sentence.

"The emphasis is not on the value of the stolen items, but the offence as it affects business and the livelihood of other em-

ployees, who are employed by the company. Some businesses close due to such offences," he said.

He further stated that Pholile abused his position of trust as he was entrusted by his

employer to make deliveries and safeguard the items but instead, he decided to steal the very same goods he was assigned to transport.

He further stated that he (Crown) proved beyond a reasonable doubt that Pholile indeed committed the offence and he pleaded guilty to the offence.

Pholile's mitigated for a lenient sentence through his lawyer on the grounds that he was a first-time offender, who pleaded guilty to the offence without wasting the court's time.

He further submitted that he lost his employment due to the offence.

"I did apologise to my employer, even though it was too late by then," he said.

He stated that he was a breadwinner at home, who had two children who were dependent on him. He added that he was remorseful for committing the offence and he was therefore applying that the court grant him an option to pay a fine; as such a sentence would be lenient, considering all the mitigating factors.

Pholile was sentenced to 36 months in prison with an option of a fine of E5,000. However, half the sentence was suspended on condition that he did not commit a similar offence.

## RDF invests over E10 mln in Maseyisini Inkhundla projects in two years

By Siphesihle Dlamini

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SINCE the beginning of 2023, the Regional Development Fund has contributed over E10 million towards the implementation of 12 projects within the Maseyisini Inkhundla. This substantial investment underscores the government's dedication to fostering development in underserved areas.

Minister of Tinkhundla Administration and Development Sikhumbuzo Dlamini has officially handed over two new educational facilities at Nzongomane High School in the Maseyisini Inkhundla, located in the Shiselweni Region.

The total investment for these facilities amounts to E2.8 million, funded through the Government's Regional Development Fund (RDF). The newly inaugurated facilities include an administration block and a block of three classrooms, both essential for enhancing the learning environment for students in the region. This initiative is part of a broader commitment by the government to improve educational infrastructure and support the development of rural communities.

In his address during the handover ceremony, Minister Dlamini expressed gratitude to His Majesty King Mswati III for commissioning the RDF, which aims to alleviate poverty and enhance the quality of life for emaSwati across all four regions of Eswatini. He stated, "What we are witnessing today is indeed a clear demonstration that His Majesty's Government has prioritised the



▲ Minister of Tinkhundla Administration and Development Sikhumbuzo Dlamini has officially handed over two new educational facilities at Nzongomane High School located in the Shiselweni Region.

provision of quality of life through ensuring that emaSwati create means to develop and provide for their families, and ensuring that no one is left behind."

Minister Sikhumbuzo emphasised the importance of including rural and remote communities in the nation's development aspirations. He remarked, "Emaswati in rural and remote areas of the Kingdom of Eswatini remain important, and this Fund ensures that they are included in the development aspirations of the nation."

Furthermore, the Minister highlighted the role of the Tinkhundla System of Governance in promoting socio-economic development through democratic principles. He noted, "The processes through which you individually and collectively organised your-

selves to form and benefit from the Fund established through the same Tinkhundla System are testimony to the legitimacy of the System which embraces good governance principles."

The handover of these infrastructural projects is also indicative of the healthy relationships and interactions between elected officials and their constituents. The Minister stressed the need for continuous feedback to maximise the effectiveness of development initiatives and to evaluate progress. He stated, "Such interactions will place emaSwati at the centre of shaping their socio-economic activities and, in turn, yield peace and stability. We are responsible and accountable to each other."

## Police record 78 drunk driving cases over the weekend

By Thokozani Mazibuko

POLICE have raised concerns after a staggering seventy-eight (78) cases of drunken driving were recorded across the country over the past weekend.

Chief Police Information and Communication Officer Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati confirmed the figures in a statement, describing them as alarming and a serious threat to road safety.

Vilakati warned motorists against getting behind the wheel while under the influence of alcohol, noting that such behaviour not only endangers the driver but also passengers, pedestrians, and other road users.

"Drunken driving remains one of the leading causes of road accidents and fatalities. We appeal to all motorists to act responsibly and make use of alternative transport if they have been drinking," she said.

Police have indicated that patrols and roadblocks will continue to be intensified as part of ongoing efforts to curb irresponsible driving and reduce accidents.

Motorists found guilty of drunken driving face hefty fines, possible imprisonment, and suspension of their driving licenses.



# 50-year-old arrested for raping niece

Stories By Delisa Magagula

A 50-year-old man from the Pigg's Peak area has been arrested and charged after a 17-year-old girl, his niece, reported that he had allegedly raped her on July 26, police said. According to the charge sheet, the alleged sexual assault occurred without the use of any protection, exposing the complainant to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections.

The offence has been brought to court under Section 3(3)(a) and Section 3(9)(b) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2018, the documents show.

Magistrate Nkosingiphile Maseko presided over the accused's first appearance at the Pigg's Peak Magistrates Court. Court records indicate that prosecutors told the court the offence is accompanied by aggravating circumstances as defined in Section 185 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act of 1938.

The aggravating factors listed include the age of the complainant, her inability to legally consent because she is a minor, and the physical and lifetime mental trauma allegedly inflicted upon her.

During the brief hearing, the accused elected to represent himself. The Crown successfully applied for the accused to be remanded in



custody until August 20, pending committal proceedings at the High Court. Magistrate Maseko advised the accused that any bail application should be filed in the High Court.

Police said the matter remains under active investigation and that relevant forensic and medical processes were being followed to preserve evidence and to ensure the complainant receives appropriate care.

Authorities also confirmed that victim support services have been made available to the young woman. Local community leaders expressed concern about the case, noting the sensitive nature of crimes involving family members and minors.

Legal experts said cases

involving minors are treated with urgency under Eswatini law and that the presence of aggravating circumstances typically leads to more serious sentencing considerations if a conviction follows.

"Courts take into account both the physical and psychological harm caused, and the fact that the complainant is under 18 will be central to the case," one practitioner explained.

Prosecutors will prepare the matter for committal to the High Court, where the accused will face trial. Meanwhile, the complainant remains under the care of family and support services as investigations continue.

## Thieves make off with E50k in stolen property

A Malkerns resident is counting losses after thieves forced entry into his double-storey home at Portion Farm and made off with goods estimated at E57,000, police confirmed.

The homeowner, 38, discovered the break-in on Sunday and reported the matter to the Malkerns Police Station. Sources familiar with the case said the intruders gained entry by breaking down a door.

Stolen items listed by the homeowner and reconfirmed by investigators include electrical wiring, water taps and other fixtures that were later valued at approximately E57,000.

A source close to the matter said the stolen goods appear to have been selected for their resale value, adding that removal of wiring and taps is consistent with thefts linked to scrap trade. However, police warned against speculation until forensic and follow-up inquiries are complete.

Inspector Mazwi Ndzimandze, Acting Deputy Chief Police Information and Communications Officer, confirmed the break-in and said investigations are ongoing.

"At this stage, no suspects have been arrested. We are following

possible leads that may result in the recovery of the stolen items and the identification of those responsible," he said.

Neighbours reported feeling unsettled by the incident, noting that properties in the area had been targeted in recent months.

"People are worried because these thieves don't just take small items, they come for wiring and fittings, which then leave the house not only stripped of value but exposed to further damage," one resident said.

Police investigators have been conducting door-to-door inquiries, gathering CCTV where available, and examining nearby scrap metal businesses for possible clues.

Residents were urged to check security footage if they have cameras and to report suspicious behaviour immediately.

Security experts told this paper that the theft of building materials and fixtures often follows economic incentives: stolen copper wiring and white goods can fetch quick cash on informal markets.

They recommended that homeowners secure external fittings, install motion-sensitive lighting, and make use of community watch groups to deter opportunistic crimes.

## Two years for stripping vehicle

A 38-year-old man was sentenced to two years' imprisonment without the option of a fine after pleading guilty to stealing a motor vehicle and stripping it of parts valued at E50,000, the Manzini Magistrate's Court heard. Celumusa Leon Mkoko and co-accused Siphelele Sivesonkhe Mamba, both 38 and from Makholweni, were implicated in the theft of a silver-grey Mazda 2 belonging to barber Lizwi Tfwala.

The vehicle was taken on June 28 from outside Standard Traders, where Tfwala had briefly left the engine running while collecting an item from his workplace.

Tfwala told the court he returned within five minutes to find his car gone. He reported the theft to police, who later discovered the abandoned vehicle in a bush at Fairview North.

By that time, officers found that the car had been stripped of its four wheels, wheel caps and battery. A steering cover had been removed and discarded nearby, and the car radio and other parts were missing. A key was recovered at the scene.

Investigating officers provided evidence to the court detailing the condition of the vehicle when recovered and described steps taken to identify and apprehend the suspects.

Mkoko pleaded guilty to contravening the Motor Vehicle Act No. 16 of 1991 and was convicted in accordance with his plea.

Mamba did not appear in court after his attorney successfully applied for a separation of trial because Mamba was not feeling well.

The court reserved the matter against Mamba pending medical reports and a future appearance. Mkoko asked for leniency at sentencing, claiming he was a first-time offender and that personal hardship had driven him to the offence.

Magistrate Sihle Dlodlu said while mitigating factors were considered, the gravity of the offence and the high value of the stolen property warranted a custodial sentence to serve as a deterrent.

The sentence was structured as two years' imprisonment without the option of a fine.

# 13 suicides in 4 weeks

The Royal Eswatini Police Service has confirmed the discovery of a man's body on a mountain in the Hhukwini Constituency in what investigators suspect is a case of suicide, the 13th reported in just over a month.

The deceased was identified as a 25-year-old Siphamandla Khanyile. Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, Chief Police Information and Communications Officer, said Khanyile's body was found at Nsukumbili on Wednesday morning, last week.

Initial investigations point to the ingestion of a poisonous substance, she said, and forensic tests are underway to determine the exact cause of death.

Khanyile's mother, Celiwe, told reporters her son left home on Tuesday morning and told his wife he would return later that day. He did not come back. Herdsmen on the mountain reportedly discovered the body the following morning and alerted authorities.

When asked whether Khanyile had shown signs of distress, his mother said the family, including his wife, had no clear indication of what might have led him to take his life.



This is the third suspected suicide reported to police this month. Earlier incidents include a 20-year-old woman from Nkiliji under Ekukhanyeni Constituency who died after ingesting a poisonous substance and a 41-year-old man from

Lwandle, who also succumbed after reportedly taking poison. Police confirmed that investigations into each case are continuing. Last month, police recorded at least 11 suicide-related deaths.

Those cases involved victims aged between 19 and 53, nine were men and two were women. Methods reported included poisoning (five cases), hanging (four cases), and two shootings, both involving serving police officers

who used service firearms at their workstations in July.

Among the recent hanging cases was that of 33-year-old Mthokozisi Mndzebele of Lushikishini in Mankayane.

He was found hanged inside his father's church days after being reported to police for allegedly raping an 80-year-old woman in his community.

That case has drawn attention to the complex intersections of alleged criminal behaviour and mental health crises.

Police and community stakeholders described the spike in suicides as deeply concerning. Senior Superintendent Vilakati urged families and neighbours to be alert to changes in behaviour and to seek support for those showing signs of severe distress.



# BUSINESS NEWS

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### Ubombo Sugar annual hike supports water access, wellness

UBOMBO Sugar Limited (USL) successfully hosted its Annual Charity Mountain Hiking Event at Mkhalfene, Big Bend over the past weekend. The event, which has become a flagship initiative in USL's community engagement calendar, was organised by the company's employee Wellness Champions as part of a wider wellness and charity program.

### Inflation data to test stocks as some investors brace for rally to pause

NEW YORK — A fresh look at inflation trends will test the U.S. stock market's rally in the coming week, with some investors saying equities are primed for a potential pullback after rocketing to records. The benchmark S&P 500 ended on Friday up more than 8% on the year and on the cusp of all-time high levels, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite was at a record, as stocks rebounded from declines following a weak employment report earlier this month.

### SA tax authorities extend jet fuel lifeline to airports

CAPE TOWN — South Africa's fuels industry body FIASA on Friday welcomed a year-long extension from tax authorities to special licences for importing and storing jet fuel, helping to avert a potential supply crisis at major airports. The Fuels Industry Association of South Africa (FIASA) said the arrangement meant its members could operate special storage warehouse (SOS) licences until October 31 next year.

## EswatiniBank

### FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.3162	17.7807
G.B. Pound	23.2547	23.9227
EURO	20.1705	20.7790
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90 /Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	

By Delisa Magagula

MADAGASCAR is finalising preparations to host the 45th Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of State and Government, set for August 17, 2025, in Antananarivo.

The high-level gathering will bring together leaders from all 16 SADC member states to discuss regional integration, economic growth, trade facilitation, infrastructure development, and political cooperation.

Confirmed attendees so far include several Heads of State and Government whose official photographs have been released on SADC's social media platforms.

The Secretariat says images will continue to be posted as more confirmations are received, with all leaders expected to be represented at the summit.

SADC member states include Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Hosting the summit is seen as a strategic opportunity for Madagascar to showcase its role in regional diplomacy and economic development initiatives.

The summit's agenda is expected to focus on deepening regional trade integration, advancing the SADC Industrialisation Strategy, and reviewing progress on cross-border infrastructure projects.

Trade facilitation will likely feature prominently, particularly as SADC works to align policies with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This alignment aims to

## Madagascar prepares to host 45th SADC Summit of Heads of State

reduce trade barriers and expand market access for the region's 350 million people.

Madagascar's government has confirmed that venues, security arrangements, and logistics are in place to receive delegations, media, and other stakeholders.

"Madagascar is honoured to welcome SADC leaders and is committed to ensuring the summit is a success," said a statement from the organising committee.

The SADC Summit rotates annually among member states, with the host nation assuming the role of Chair for the following year.

This year's meeting will also provide a platform for reviewing progress on commitments made during the previous summit and setting priorities for the year ahead.

The summit is expected to draw attention from regional and international observers, given SADC's role in shaping trade policy, security cooperation, and sustainable development in Southern Africa.

Since its establishment in 1980, SADC has been instrumental in fostering cooperation and economic development among its members.

The organisation's agenda has evolved from primarily political liberation efforts to encompassing broad economic integration and sustainable development goals.

The SADC Free Trade Area, operational since 2008, was a precursor to the larger continental AfCFTA framework, which aims to create a single market for goods and services across Africa's 55 countries.

SADC's continued commitment to removing trade barriers positions the region as a critical



player in global supply chains.

By hosting the summit, Madagascar is expected to take on the role of SADC chairperson for the next year. This position allows it to influence the regional agenda and advocate for projects that align with its national development priorities.

The outcomes of the 45th SADC Summit will shape the trajectory of Southern Africa's economic and political cooperation for the near future.

## EIPA set to boost Eswatini's global trade potential

By Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) has introduced the Export Guide 2025, a detailed resource designed to help local businesses navigate the complexities of selling goods and services internationally.

Launched in Mbabane, the guide provides step-by-step instructions for companies looking to start or grow export operations, from initial readiness assessment to entering foreign markets. EIPA says the initiative comes at a time when global trade is becoming increasingly competitive and interconnected.

The Export Guide 2025 breaks the process into ten steps:

1. Assess export readiness
  2. Conduct market research
  3. Develop an export plan
  4. Obtain required export documents
  5. Consider shipping and logistics options
  6. Determine export pricing
  7. Explore export finance
  8. Obtain customs clearance
  9. Mitigate potential issues
  10. Start exporting
- In addition to the process, the guide directs



### EXPORT GUIDE



businesses to EIPA's support services, which include export readiness training, market research tools, trade show participation, and business-to-business networking.

It also provides access to resources on preferential trade agreements, standards compliance, customs procedures, logistics, and financing options.

"Eswatini currently benefits from multiple trade agreements, including the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), Southern

African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and European Union Economic Partnership Agreements," reads the statement in part.

These agreements provide preferential or duty-free access to markets with a combined population exceeding 2 billion people.

Thandeka Dlamini, Manager of External Trade Promotion at EIPA, said the new publication is intended to remove barriers for businesses that are ready to grow.

"Exporting can unlock immense growth opportunities for local enterprises. With the Export Guide 2025, we aim to demystify the export process and empower Eswatini businesses, large and small, to compete and succeed in global markets," Dlamini said.

The guide also addresses intellectual property protection, compliance with international regulations, and strategies to overcome logistical and financial hurdles.

The Export Guide 2025 is available for free download at <https://investeswatini.org.sz/?r3d=export-guide2025>.

Businesses interested in training or further export assistance can contact EIPA at [trade@sipa.org.sz](mailto:trade@sipa.org.sz).



# Ubombo Sugar annual hike supports water access, wellness

By Delisa Magagula

UBOMBO Sugar Limited (USL) successfully hosted its Annual Charity Mountain Hiking Event at Mkhalamfene, Big Bend over the past weekend.

The event, which has become a flagship initiative in USL's community engagement calendar, was organised by the company's employee Wellness Champions as part of a wider wellness and charity program. It brought together company management, employees, local officials, business partners, and community members for a day of purposeful activity aimed at supporting local development and promoting health. The hiking event was entirely employee-driven, coordinated by USL's Wellness Champions staff members dedicated to promoting health, wellness, and social responsibility within the company and beyond. This initiative underscores USL's commitment to fostering a healthy workforce while simultaneously giving back to the communities in which it operates.

"This event is more than just a hike. It is an opportunity for our employees to lead by example in promoting wellness and community development. Every step taken on the mountain is a step towards improving lives, especially those of the children and families who rely on clean water and safe passage to school," said Leonard Ndzimandze, Corporate Affairs Head at USL.

A major highlight of this year's event was the handover of a 5,000-litre water tank to the local community. This donation builds on a similar contribution made during last year's event.

The additional water tank aims to improve access to potable water for residents, particularly the children who travel the mountainous route daily to attend school.

The water tanks were identified as a critical need during consultations with community leaders, who emphasised the challenges of accessing clean water in this rural area.

The contribution supports USL's ongoing efforts to improve living conditions and health outcomes through sustainable community investments.

The event was attended by Themba Msibi, Lubombo Regional Administrator, and several local chiefs who praised USL's consistent commitment to social responsibility and community partnership.

Regional Administrator Msibi highlighted the importance of public-private cooperation in achieving developmental goals.

"This initiative demonstrates the power of unity between the private sector and local communities. Ubombo Sugar's continued investment in these partnerships helps foster growth and stability in our region," Msibi said.

USL reported strong participation, with over 3,000 branded t-shirts sold to participants and supporters. The funds raised through the sale of these shirts contributed directly to the costs of the event and community projects, including the water tank donation.

This level of engagement reflects the event's growing popularity and the commu-



▲Some of the patrons who took part in the walk.

nity's support for the company's social initiatives.

Employees and community members alike praised the event for promoting physical activity and social cohesion. The hike also served as a platform for networking and strengthening relationships among stakeholders.

The Annual Charity Mountain Hiking Event aligns with USL's broader corporate wellness strategy, which focuses on employee health and well-being as a foundation for productivity and community engagement.

The company's Wellness Champions play a key role in designing and implementing health programs that extend beyond the workplace, reinforcing USL's philosophy of shared value.

"Our wellness champions have been instrumental in ensuring that this event remains relevant and impactful. Their leadership motivates others to participate actively in improving health outcomes for themselves and the communities around them," said Ndzimandze.

The hiking event is a well-established tradition at USL, now entering its several years of continuous operation.

Over time, it has evolved into a symbol of the company's dedication to social responsibility and sustainable community development.

This initiative complements other ongoing community programs focused on education, water and sanitation, and local economic empowerment.

The company's strategic approach to corporate social responsibility includes collaboration with government bodies, non-governmental organisations, and community groups to maximise impact.

USL has reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining and expanding its community initiatives.

The company plans to continue supporting infrastructure projects, wellness programs, and educational outreach to improve the quality of life for residents in Big Bend and surrounding areas.



The Corporate Affairs Head also acknowledged the contributions of all participants, sponsors, and partners, emphasising that collective effort is key to achieving meaningful progress.

"As a company rooted in this community, our responsibility extends beyond business operations. Together with our employees and partners, we are committed to building healthier, stronger communities," Ndzi-

mandze said. Ubombo Sugar Limited is a leading sugar producer in Eswatini, known for its sustainable agricultural practices and active community engagement.

The company operates with a focus on environmental stewardship, economic development, and social responsibility, making it a key player in Eswatini's industrial and social landscape.



# Inflation data to test stocks as some investors brace for rally to pause

By Amanda Cooper

NEW YORK — A fresh look at inflation trends will test the U.S. stock market's rally in the coming week, with some investors saying equities are primed for a potential pullback after rocketing to records.

The benchmark S&P 500 ended on Friday up more than 8% on the year and on the cusp of all-time high levels, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite was at a record, as stocks rebounded from declines following a weak employment report earlier this month.

Strategists at firms including Deutsche Bank and Morgan Stanley have recently said the market could be poised for some level of pullback after a largely unabated climb over the past four months, which has pushed valuations to historically expensive levels as a seasonally treacherous period for stocks begins.

The monthly U.S. consumer price index report, due on Tuesday, could cause volatility. Data showing higher-than-expected inflation could undermine the growing expectation for impending interest rate cuts.

"I do think the market is set up for a bit of a pullback," said Dominic Pappalardo, chief multi-asset strategist at Morningstar Wealth. "There's a lot of concern bubbling underneath."

The S&P 500 has surged 28% since its low for the year in April, as investor fears about a tariff-induced recession calmed after President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" announcement earlier that month had set off extreme asset volatility.

The index is trading at over 22 times its earnings estimates for the next year, well above its long-term average P/E ratio of 15.8 after recently reaching its highest valuation in over four years, according to LSEG Datastream.

Investors are also wary of risks posed



▲ Traders work on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City, U.S.

by the calendar. Over the past 35 years, August and September have ranked as the worst-performing months for the S&P 500, according to the Stock Trader's Almanac. The index has declined an average of 0.6% in August and 0.8% in September -- the only months of negative average performance for the index during that time period.

"The combination of a softer payroll number with concerns of tariff-related inflation could be the recipe for ... a correction, especially in the seasonally weak third quarter," Morgan Stanley equity strategist Michael Wilson said in a note this week. Still, Wilson said his 12-month outlook was bullish, adding "we're buyers of pullbacks."

The CPI for July is expected to have climbed 2.8% on an annual basis, according to a Reuters poll of economists. Investors will be watching to see if Trump's tariffs on imports are translating into higher prices

after the June CPI report suggested levies were impacting the prices of some goods.

Market bets on Fed rate cuts rose following the recent weak jobs data as investors expect the central bank will ease monetary policy to help shore up the labor market. Fed funds futures indicate an over 90% chance the Fed will cut at its next meeting in September, with at least two cuts priced in for this year, LSEG data showed.

That narrative could be at risk if CPI rises more than expected, making the Fed more hesitant to cut rates, investors said.

"If the CPI suggests that the market got a little ahead of itself, that can create volatility," said Angelo Kourkafas, senior investment strategist at Edward Jones. "But if it's not worse than feared ... that can further reinforce that we are now in an inflection point for the Fed."

The prospect of higher tariffs and the economic fallout from those levies already

instituted by the Trump administration has been a persistent theme clouding markets, but stocks have managed to rise to records despite the uncertainty.

Higher tariffs on imports from dozens of countries took effect on Thursday, raising the average U.S. import duty to its highest in a century, while the president also this week announced plans for levies on semiconductor chips and pharmaceutical imports.

China could face a potential tariff increase on Tuesday unless Trump approves an extension of a prior truce.

The impact of higher tariffs on the economy could take a while to show up, and "the market has kind of ignored the potential negative impact of this friction to the economy," said Matt Rowe, senior portfolio manager at Man Group.

"The market has gotten comfortable with tariffs being kind of a non-event, which I don't think is correct," Rowe said. (Reuters)

By Olesya Astakhova, Ahmad Ghaddar and Alex Lawler

CAPE TOWN — South Africa's fuels industry body FIASA on Friday welcomed a year-long extension from tax authorities to special licences for importing and storing jet fuel, helping to avert a potential supply crisis at major airports.

The Fuels Industry Association of South Africa (FIASA) said the arrangement meant its members could operate special storage warehouse (SOS) licences until October 31 next year.

The extension allows for continued imports of aviation kerosene, which will be stored in licensed tanks and pumped into the multi-product pipeline for supply to O.R.Tambo International Airport, one of Africa's busiest passenger hubs.

The licence extension from the South African Revenue Service (SARS) also covers the separate importation and storage of illuminating kerosene mainly used in household cooking.

"The extension is a critical intervention in safeguarding South Africa's security of sup-

ply, particularly for the aviation sector and communities that rely on illuminating kerosene," FIASA said in a statement.

The importation and movement of both aviation kerosene and illuminating kerosene are governed by South Africa's Customs and Excise Act and its provisions needed to be strictly adhered to, SARS said previously when granting SOS licences last year.

A net importer of refined petroleum products, South Africa has lost around half of its refinery capacity over the last five years, curtailing the provision of jet fuel to airports and leading to shortages.

In January this year, the national transport department took extraordinary measures in securing just over 121 million litres of jet fuel for O.R. Tambo airport after a fire at the Natref refinery caused it to shut down operations.

South Africa's only inland refinery majority-owned by Sasol, Natref crude oil refinery is one of the main suppliers of jet fuel to domestic airports. (Reuters)

## South African tax authorities extend jet fuel lifeline to airports



▲ A truck is seen at South African petro-chemical company Sasol's synthetic fuel plant in Secunda, north of Johannesburg.



# Altman addresses ‘bumpy’ GPT-5 rollout, bringing 4o back, and the ‘chart crime’

**DURING** a Reddit ask-me-anything session on Friday, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and key members of the GPT-5 team were peppered with questions about the new model and requests to bring back its previous model, GPT-4o. They also asked Altman about the most embarrassing — and perhaps funniest — snafu in the presentation, the “chart crime.” One of the new features that GPT-5 rolled out is a real-time router that decides which model to use for a particular prompt, either responding quickly or taking additional time to “think” through answers.

But multiple people in the AMA on the r/ChatGPT Reddit complained GPT-5 wasn’t working as well for them as 4o did. Altman said the reason GPT-5 seemed “dumber” was the router wasn’t working properly when it was rolled out Thursday.

“GPT-5 will seem smarter starting today. Yesterday, we had a sev and the autoswitcher

was out of commission for a chunk of the day, and the result was GPT-5 seemed way dumber. Also, we are making some interventions to how the decision boundary works that should help you get the right model more often. We will make it more transparent about which model is answering a given query,” Altman promised.

Still, people on the AMA lobbied so hard to bring 4o back for Plus subscribers that Altman promised to at least look into that. “We are looking into letting Plus users to continue to use 4o. We are trying to gather more data on the tradeoffs,” he wrote.

And Altman also promised, “We are going to double rate limits for Plus users as we finish rollout.” This should give people a chance to play and learn the new model, adopt it to their use cases without worry of running out of monthly prompts.

Predictably, he was also asked about the wildly inaccurate chart the team presented during the live presentation that quickly

became the butt of many “chart crime” jokes. The chart presented a lower benchmark score with a much taller bar.

Altman didn’t answer questions about the chart during the AMA, but on Thursday he did call the chart a “mega chart screwup” on X. Others noted the charts in the published blog post were correct.

But the damage was done. Jokes ensued about using GPT for charts in a corporate presentation. GPT-5 reviewer Simon Willison, who had early access and generally liked the model’s performance, also pointed out that turning data into a table was “good example of a GPT-5 failure.”

In any case, Altman promised fixes to the items that seemed to concern people the most. He ended the AMA with a promise: “We will continue to work to get things stable and will keep listening to feedback.”

(TechCrunch)



▲ OpenAI CEO Sam Altman.

## Former Googlers’ AI startup OpenArt creates ‘brain rot’ videos in just one click

AI-generated “brain rot” videos are popping up all over the internet and getting a lot of attention. Currently gaining traction among younger users, these clips feature wild characters, like a shark wearing sneakers and a ballerina with a cappuccino for a head. One startup driving this trend is OpenArt, founded by two former Google employees in 2022. It touts around 3 million monthly active users.

The company recently launched a new “one-click story” feature in open beta, which allows users to input a single sentence, a script, or even a song and turn it into a one-minute video with a story arc. This can include anything from a light-hearted story for TikTok to more serious content like explainer videos or music videos for YouTube. OpenArt even envisions this feature being used for advertising.

With One-Click Story, there are three templates to choose from: Character Vlog, Music Video, or Explainer. For a character vlog, users start by uploading an image of their character and entering a prompt. If a song is uploaded, the software understands the lyrics and creates an animation that aligns with the song’s themes, like illustrating

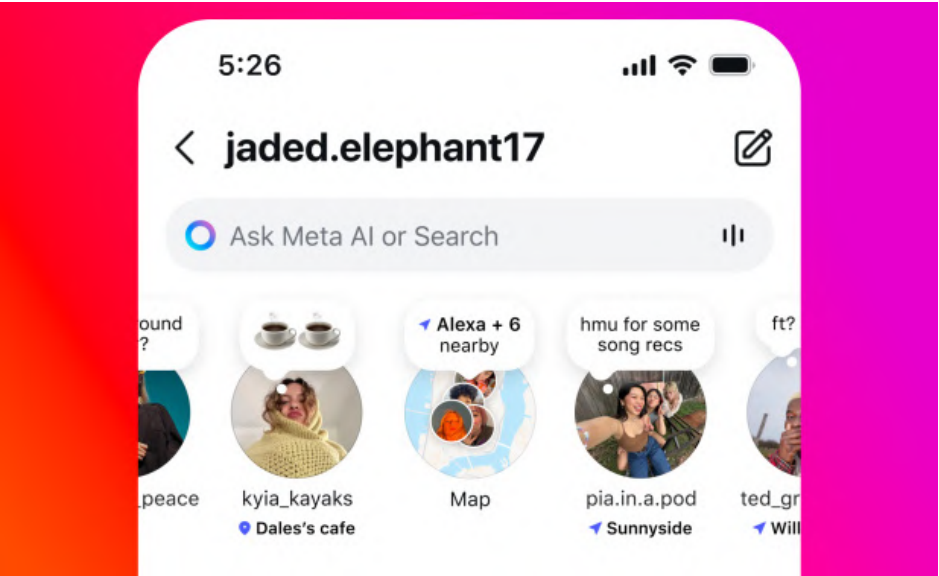
flowers blooming in a garden. Users can edit individual clips by revisiting the editor’s storyboard mode and tweaking prompts for a more refined result. The platform aggregates over 50 AI models, allowing users to choose their preferred tools, such as DALLÉ-3, GPT, Imagen, Flux Kontext, and Stable Diffusion.

The goal of the new feature is to further lower the barrier for becoming an AI creator, a medium that remains immensely popular despite ongoing controversy.

While these tools can be beneficial — like using video generators to quickly produce content with original characters and narratives — there are numerous ethical issues to address. These include imitating other artists’ styles, intellectual property rights, and the dangers of misuse and creating misinformation.

During testing, we noticed that the Character Vlog option may tread into a grey legal area due to the types of characters it offers — such as Pikachu, SpongeBob, and Super Mario — which could pose risks of intellectual property (IP) infringement. In June, Disney and Universal sued AI firm Midjourney over AI-generated images.

(TechCrunch)



▲ Although Meta has made it clear that location sharing is off by default, there have been numerous posts on social media urging users to turn off location sharing, incorrectly claiming that it’s automatically turned on.

## How to use Instagram Map, protect your privacy

**FOLLOWING** Wednesday’s launch of Instagram’s new Snap Map-like opt-in “Instagram Map” feature — which lets U.S. users share their most recent active location with others and discover location-based content — Instagram head Adam Mosseri is having to reassure people that their location is only visible to others if they decide to share it.

Although Meta has made it clear that location sharing is off by default, there have been numerous posts on social media urging users to turn off location sharing, incorrectly claiming that it’s automatically turned on.

“We’re double checking everything, but so far it looks mostly like people are confused and assume that, because they can see themselves on the map when they open, other people can see them too,” Mosseri said in a Threads post. “We’re still checking everything though to make sure nobody shares location without explicitly deciding to do so, which, by the way, requires a double consent by design (we ask you to confirm after you say you want to share).”

Mosseri also said that some people are

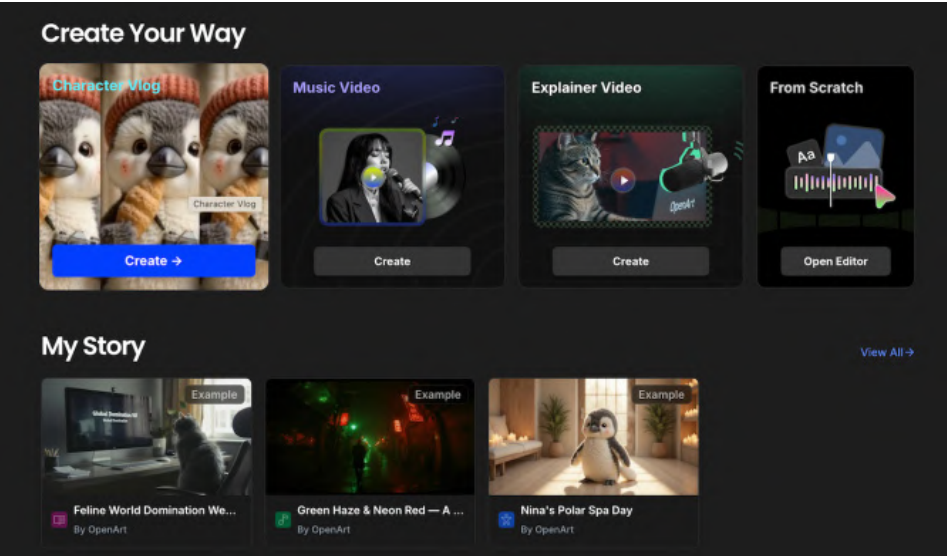
“confused” about how the feature works. For instance, people are accessing the feature and then seeing the map populated with the location information of some users. This is because the feature automatically pulls in location tags from recently posted Stories or Reels that include a tagged location.

It’s worth noting that this isn’t new, as Instagram already had location tags visible to users in its map view. However, the new Instagram Map feature makes this information a lot easier to access. The new feature might make you rethink whether you want to post your Stories and Reels with location tags (especially if you’re still at the location).

If you turn on your location on Instagram Map, your location only updates when you open the app or have it running in the background, meaning it doesn’t provide continuous, real-time location updates. This is different from Snap Map, which lets users choose whether their location is updated only when they open the app or in real time.

For those who want to ensure their location is turned off on Instagram Map, we’ll walk you through the steps below.

(TechCrunch)



▲ One startup driving this trend is OpenArt, founded by two former Google employees in 2022. It touts around 3 million monthly active users.





# Egypt's annual urban consumer price inflation down to 13.9% in July

EGYPT'S annual urban consumer price inflation dropped to 13.9% in July from 14.9% in June, data from statistics agency CAPMAS showed on Sunday. Urban food and beverage prices were down 3% overall compared with June 2025 but rose by 3.4% against July 2024. Urban inflation on a monthly basis inched down in July by 0.5% compared with June, as meat and poultry prices were down by 4.9%, fruits by 11% and vegetables by 7%, while the

prices of bread and cereals were up by 0.4% and seafood by 0.2%. Egypt's annual inflation has plunged from a record high of 38% in September 2023, helped by an \$8 billion financial support package agreed with the International Monetary Fund in March 2024. Core inflation, which strips out volatile items such as fuel and some food types, rose to 11.6% year-on-year in July from 11.4% in June, the central bank said later on Sunday. (Reuters)

# African nations hopeful to re-negotiate Trump tariffs, fear economic fallout

PRESIDENT Donald Trump's sweeping new tariffs have taken effect against dozens of countries, including South Africa. Trump began imposing higher import taxes on numerous countries Thursday just as the economic fallout of his months long tariff threats has begun to cause visible damage to the US economy. South Africa's leader said he spoke with Trump as some African nations hope they could still negotiate tariff rates that threaten to increase unemployment in countries already struggling with high rates of joblessness. President Cyril Ramaphosa's office said he and Trump spoke Wednesday ahead of steep 30% tariffs coming into effect on some South African exports to the U.S. on Friday. The statement said the two

leaders "undertook to continue with further engagements." South Africa has said it believes it can still negotiate with the U.S., even after Trump has been especially critical of the country. The Trump administration said it has stopped aid and assistance to Africa's most diverse economy over what it calls its anti-white and anti-American policies. South African neighbors Botswana and Lesotho have also said they still hope to negotiate better tariff rates. Lesotho, a tiny mountainous country, was threatened with a huge 50% tariff rate before it was reduced to 15%. It says that is still high enough to threaten thousands of jobs and businesses in its crucial clothing sector, which makes and exports well-known brands like Levi's and others to the American market. (Reuters)



▲ US President Donald Trump.



# Tshisekedi reshuffles, appoints two opposition politicians

THE changes are not radical at first view... but to observers, they are notable nonetheless. President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, reshuffled parts of his government on Friday in a move that has long been awaited by the population following "political consultations" that were launched earlier in the year.

The head of state notably brought in two opposition politicians: Adolphe Muzito, a former prime minister, was named vice prime-minister and will also be in charge of the budget. And Floribert Anzuluni, leader of a minor opposition party, was named head of regional integration. Several other officials remained in the government, but changed jobs, among them notably Eve Bazaiba, who transitioned from the environment ministry to social affairs, and Aimé Boji, permuted from the budget ministry to industry. Judith Suminwa, meanwhile, remains prime minister. According to some analysts, these changes could be a way for the

Congolese president to consolidate his party and reach a political consensus around his figure. The next presidential election in the DRC is set for 2028. (Africa News)



▲ President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Félix Tshisekedi.



# Gabon's military leader announces he will run for president

ALMOST two years after he led a coup to end more than five decades of Bongo dynasty rule, Gabon's military leader Brice Oligui Nguema has announced he will run in April's presidential elections. After the ouster of President Ali Bongo in August 2023, Nguema had vowed to give power back to civilians following a transitional period. Given the green light in January by the transitional Parliament, a new electoral code enables members of the military and magistrates to run in elections.

Nguema made the announcement at a speech in Gabon's capital. The 50 year old said his vision for the nation was a "Gabon rising from the ashes", as he called on the crowd to get behind his candidacy. To throw his hat in the ring for the role, the former head of the presidential guard will have to abandon his current role at least temporarily, according to Facebook page Infos CTRI officiel. "If he's not elected, he will return to the barracks," the page added. Elections in Gabon are due on April 12th. (Africa News)



UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelenskiy won backing from Europe and NATO on Sunday as he rallied diplomatic support ahead of a Russia-U.S. summit this week where Kyiv fears Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump may try to dictate terms for ending the 3-1/2-year war.

Trump, who for weeks had been threatening new sanctions against Russia for failing to halt the conflict, announced instead last Friday that he would hold an August 15 summit with Putin in Alaska. A White House official said on Saturday that Trump was open to Zelenskiy attending, but that preparations currently were for a bilateral meeting with Putin.

The Kremlin leader last week ruled out meeting Zelenskiy, saying the conditions for such an encounter were “unfortunately still far” from being met.

Trump said a potential deal would involve “some swapping of territories to the betterment of both (sides)”, a statement that compounded Ukrainian alarm that it may face pressure to surrender more land.

Zelenskiy says any decisions taken without Ukraine will be “stillborn” and unworkable. On Saturday the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Finland and the European Commission said that any diplomatic solution must protect the security interests of Ukraine and Europe. “The U.S. has the power to force Russia to negotiate seriously,” EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on Sunday. “Any deal between the U.S. and Russia must have Ukraine and the EU included, for it is a matter of Ukraine’s and the whole of Europe’s security.” EU foreign ministers will meet on Monday to discuss next steps, she said.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte told U.S. network ABC News that Friday’s summit “will be about testing Putin, how serious he is on bringing this terrible war to an end”.

He added: “It will be, of course, about security guarantees, but also about the absolute need to acknowledge that Ukraine decides on its own future, that Ukraine has to be a sovereign nation, deciding on its own geopolitical future.”

Russia, which launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, now holds nearly a fifth of the country. Rutte said a future peace deal could not include legal recognition of Russian control over Ukrainian land, although it might include de facto recognition.

# Zelenskiy wins EU, NATO backing as he seeks place at table with Trump and Putin



▲ Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy won backing from Europe and NATO on Sunday as he rallied diplomatic support ahead of a Russia-U.S. summit this week where Kyiv fears Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump may try to dictate terms for ending the 3-1/2-year war.

He compared it to the situation after World War Two when the United States accepted that the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were de facto controlled by the Soviet Union but did not legally recognise their annexation.

Zelenskiy said on Sunday: “The end of the war must be fair, and I am grateful to everyone who stands with Ukraine and our people today.”

A European official said Europe had come up with a counter-proposal to Trump’s, but declined to provide details. Russian officials accused Europe of trying to thwart Trump’s efforts to end the war.

“The Euro-imbeciles are trying to prevent American efforts to help resolve the Ukrainian conflict,” former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev posted on social media on Sunday. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a vituperative

statement that the relationship between Ukraine and the European Union resembled “necrophilia”.

Roman Alekhin, a Russian war blogger, said Europe had been reduced to the role of a spectator.

“If Putin and Trump reach an agreement directly, Europe will be faced with a fait accompli. Kyiv - even more so,” he said.

## CAPTURED TERRITORY

No details of the proposed territorial swap that Trump alluded to have been officially announced.

In addition to Crimea, which it seized in 2014, Russia has formally claimed the Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia as its own, although it controls only about 70% of the last three. It holds smaller pieces of territory in three other regions, while Ukraine says it holds a sliver of Russia’s Kursk region.

Sergei Markov, a pro-Kremlin analyst, said a swap could entail Russia handing over 1,500 sq km to Ukraine and obtaining 7,000 sq km, which he said Russia would capture anyway within about six months.

He provided no evidence to back any of those figures. Russia took only about 500 sq km of territory in July, according to Western military analysts who say its grinding advances have come at the cost of very high casualties.

Ukraine and its European allies have been haunted for months by the fear that Trump, keen to claim credit for making peace and hoping to seal lucrative joint business deals between the U.S. and Russia, could align with Putin to cut a deal that would be deeply disadvantageous to Kyiv.

They had drawn some encouragement lately as Trump, having piled heavy pressure on Zelenskiy and berated him publicly in the Oval Office in February, began criticising Putin as Russia pounded Kyiv and other cities with its heaviest air attacks of the war.

But the impending Putin-Trump summit, agreed during a trip to Moscow by Trump’s envoy Steve Witkoff last week, has revived fears that Kyiv and Europe could be sidelined.

“What we will see emerge from Alaska will almost certainly be a catastrophe for Ukraine and Europe,” wrote Phillips P. O’Brien, professor of strategic studies at the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

“And Ukraine will face the most terrible dilemma. Do they accept this humiliating and destructive deal? Or do they go it alone, unsure of the backing of European states?”

Ukrainian political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko said on Sunday that Kyiv’s partnership with its European allies was critical to countering any attempts to keep it away from the table.

“For us right now, a joint position with the Europeans is our main resource,” he said on Ukrainian radio.

(Reuters)

# Netanyahu says new Gaza offensive will start soon

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday he expected to complete a new Gaza offensive “fairly quickly”, as the U.N. Security Council heard new demands for an end to suffering in the Palestinian enclave.

Netanyahu, speaking after his security cabinet on Friday approved a much-criticised plan to take control of Gaza City said he had no choice but to “complete the job” and defeat Hamas to free hostages seized from Israel. He said the new Gaza offensive aimed to tackle two remaining Hamas strongholds in what he said was his only option because of the Palestinian group’s refusal to lay down its arms. Hamas says it will not disarm unless an independent Palestinian state is established.

It was not clear when the offensive, which would be the latest in successive attempts by the Israeli military to clear the militants from Gaza City, would begin.

“The timeline that we set for the action is fairly quickly. We want, first of all, to enable safe zones to be established so the civilian population of Gaza City can move out,” he added. The city, home to a million people before the two-year-old war, would be moved into “safe zones”, he said. Palestinians say these have not protected them from Israeli fire in the past.

Israel’s military chief has voiced opposition to occupying the entire Gaza Strip and has warned that expanding the offensive could endanger the lives of hostages Hamas is still holding and draw its troops into protracted and deadly guerrilla warfare.

Netanyahu said his goal was not to occupy Gaza. “We want a security belt right next to our border, but we don’t want to stay in Gaza. That’s not our purpose,” he said.

European representatives at the United Nations said famine was unfolding in Gaza and Israel’s plan would only make things worse. “Expanding military operations will only endanger the lives of all civilians

in Gaza, including the remaining hostages, and result in further unnecessary suffering,” Denmark, France, Greece, Slovenia and the United Kingdom said in a joint statement. “This is a manmade crisis, and therefore urgent action is needed to halt starvation and to surge aid into Gaza,” they said. Malnutrition is widespread in the enclave due to what international aid agencies say is a deliberate plan by Israel to restrict aid. Israel rejects that allegation, blaming Hamas for the hunger among Palestinians and saying a lot of aid has been distributed.

The U.S. representative at the Security Council defended Netanyahu and said Washington was committed to addressing humanitarian needs, freeing the hostages and achieving peace.

Netanyahu said Israel was working with Washington on creating a surge of aid into Gaza, including by land.

Five more people, including two children, died of malnutrition and starvation in Gaza in the past 24 hours, Gaza’s health

ministry said, taking the number of deaths from such causes to 217, including 100 children.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said a further 23 people had been killed so far in the war by airdrops of aid which countries have resorted to due to the difficulties of getting aid in by road.

In the latest case, a parachuted aid box killed a 14-year-old boy awaiting food with other desperate Palestinians at a tent encampment in central Gaza, according to medics and video verified by Reuters.

“We have repeatedly warned of the dangers of these inhumane methods and have consistently called for the safe and sufficient delivery of aid through land crossings, especially food, infant formula, medicines, and medical supplies,” it said.

Italy said Israel should heed its own army’s warnings before sending more troops into Gaza, where the Israeli military already holds large parts of the territory.

(Reuters)





▲ Apostle Dr M.A. Simelane leading in worship during the Schools Mission Youth Revival Crusade & Gathering at Prince of Wales, Mbabane. This was a 3-day event.



▲ A section of the audience on Day 2.

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE Prince of Wales Stadium in Mbabane became the beating heart of spiritual renewal from August 7-9, 2025, as the much-anticipated Schools Mission Youth Revival Crusade & Gathering drew thousands of young people, leaders, and believers from across the Kingdom and beyond.

What was billed as three days of divine encounter transformed into an extraordinary wave of worship, preaching, and fellowship that many attendees say will leave an eternal mark on their lives. From the moment the gates opened on Thursday evening, the atmosphere was electric, not with mere anticipation, but with an almost tangible sense of purpose. Free entrance and return transport had been promised, and the result was an overwhelming turnout, with buses and kombis streaming into the city from rural and urban corners alike. Organisers' decision to remove all financial barriers proved prophetic; the only ticket needed was a hunger for God.

The line-up read like a who's who of gospel powerhouses. Local and international ministers took the stage, each bringing a unique flavour to the revival. Gospel sensation Bhelekazi opened the first night with soaring worship that melted hearts and prepared the ground for what was to come. Oncemore Six, with his soulful and heartfelt delivery, bridged cultures and generations, reminding the youth that God's love remains steadfast through all seasons.

Brother Solomon Zikalala, a young yet fiery preacher took to the pulpit with a message that struck directly at the heart of the youth: a call to personal transformation, unshaken identity, and boldness in faith. Apostle Dr. M.A. Simelane also delivered his seasoned teaching, unpacking scripture with wisdom and urgency, while Apostle P.P. Zikalala charged the crowd to take revival beyond the stadium's walls and into their schools, workplaces, and families. Also, Eswatini gospel musician Frans MkhaliPhi delivered worship that brought heaven to earth.

The first two nights, dubbed the "Massive Crusade" sessions, were monumental.

# Mbabane youth set ablaze at Schools Mission Revival Crusade



▲ Apostle P. P. Zikalala ministering the Word.

Waves of worship crashed over the stadium as choirs, bands, and individual artists united in a sound that echoed beyond Mbabane's hills. Altar calls drew hundreds, young and old, to publicly commit or recommit their lives to Christ. Testimonies began to spread rapidly: stories of healing, reconciled relationships, and renewed hope in situations that once seemed hopeless.

## Finale

Saturday's grand finale, themed the Youth Gathering & Worship Experience, started early, with streams of attendees filling the stadium hours before the 10 a.m. kick-off. It was a day of unrestrained joy, where



▲ Renowned South African gospel musician Oncemore Six rendering his performance.

dancing and singing erupted spontaneously between ministry sessions. Small prayer circles dotted the grounds, and laughter mingled with tears as strangers became family in the presence of God.

The youth, often described as the heartbeat of any nation, took centre stage, leading prayers, sharing testimonies, and declaring bold visions for their futures.

## Success

Organisers of the Schools Mission hailed the event as a resounding success. "This was more than just an event. It was a movement. We saw God meet people where they are, and we believe seeds were planted that will



▲ Brother Solomon Zikalala on stage.

change lives and even schools across the nation."

Brother Solomon Zikalala quoted **1 Corinthians 2:9**: What eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and mind has not conceived, God has prepared for all who love Him. "The Lord honoured us again! People came, we praised and worshipped the Lord, the Gospel was preached, 20 souls were registered saved, and God takes all the glory," he said.

If the bright lights, powerful preaching, and world-class music left a mark, it was the underlying message that truly lingered: that revival is not a moment, but a lifestyle.



# Nothando Hlophe announces release of ‘Sithumela Wena’

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI Gospel powerhouse Nothando Hlophe is poised to make waves in the music industry with her upcoming single titled ‘Sithumela Wena.’

Scheduled for release on August 15, 2025, the song will be available on all major digital platforms. The single was recorded live at the Mavuso Trade Centre during her latest live album recording, ‘A New Dawn’, on June 7, 2025. This event not only showcased Hlophe’s remarkable vocal prowess but also highlighted her deep connection with her audience, creating an atmosphere filled with worship and spiritual fervour.

The title ‘Sithumela Wena,’ which translates to ‘We Are Sending You, Lord,’ encapsulates the essence of Nothando Hlophe’s message in this new release. The song is described as a powerful declaration and prayer for divine intervention, resonating deeply with the spiritual needs of her listeners. Nothando Hlophe emphasised that this project represents a new season in her musical journey, one that is focused on worship, healing, and spiritual awakening.

Nothando Hlophe stated, “Get ready to worship, celebrate, and declare the name of Jesus like never before! This is more than music; it’s a movement, a sound from heaven for this generation.” Nothando Hlophe is no stranger to the gospel music scene. With a legacy rooted in the renowned group Women in Praise, she has carved out a niche for herself as a solo artist. Her music seamlessly blends traditional African



▲ Nothando Hlophe.

gospel with contemporary praise, making her a beloved figure not only in Eswatini but across Southern Africa.

Fans and followers eagerly anticipate the release of Sithumela Wena, which promises to deliver soul-stirring excellence and

glorious harmonies. Nothando Hlophe’s ability to connect deeply with her audience through her music has been a hallmark of her career, and this new single is expected to further solidify her impact in the gospel music landscape.

## Bongiswa & Darren for second edition of ECOFEST

ESWATINI international comedy stars Bongiswa & Darren have been added to the second edition of the Eswatini International Comedy Festival (ECOFEST), set to take place on September 26, 2025.

This highly anticipated event will be an unforgettable evening filled with laughter and entertainment, showcasing a blend of local and international comedic talent. The event has already confirmed comedians Baldwin Bals and Ndosh among others. Tickets for ECOFEST 2025 are already on sale, allowing comedy enthusiasts to secure their spots early. Early bird tickets are priced at E120 and can be purchased exclusively through Delta Pay. Pre-sale tickets will be available for E150, while tickets bought at the gate will cost E200. This annual event will take place at the Sibane Sami Hotel in Ezulwini. ECOFEST was founded by the charismatic comedian Bonginkosi Dlamini, affectionately known as Dr. Shakes. Dlamini’s vision for the festival is to showcase comedic talent from across Southern Africa while highlighting local and emerging artists. “This year, 2025 marks the 2nd edition of ECOFEST, and we aim to make it bigger and better than the inaugural event,” Dlamini stated, emphasising the festival’s growth and its significance in the entertainment calendar of Eswatini.

One of the most exciting developments for this year’s festival is the introduction of a comedy search aimed at uncovering local talent from one of the universities in the country. This initiative will provide a selected student comedian with the



▲ Comedians Darren and Bongiswa.

unique opportunity to share the stage with renowned international acts.

### Commitment

Dlamini expressed his commitment to nurturing local talent, saying, “We want to give our local comedians a platform to showcase their skills alongside established performers. It’s about creating opportunities and fostering growth in our comedy scene.”

ECOFEST 2025 is set to feature an impressive lineup of comedic acts from

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



▲ Sancheziey.

## Sancheziey to perform in Nelspruit

LOCAL artist Sancheziey prepares to take the stage at the highly anticipated ‘Kusile Kwetfu Cultural Celebration’ in Nelspruit.

Slated for September 20, 2025, this performance marks a pivotal moment in Sancheziey’s career, particularly following a period of relative quiet since the breakout success of his hit song, ‘Siyabonga Salukazana.’ Reflecting on his journey, Sancheziey has expressed feelings of being overlooked in the local music scene. The artist, known for his infectious melodies and heartfelt lyrics, admitted that the lack of participation in major local events has weighed heavily on him.

“It hurt my feelings,” he shared, acknowledging the emotional toll of being sidelined. However, he views the upcoming event as a transformative opportunity. “When such an event comes through, it’s a different story,” he remarked, highlighting the excitement and renewed hope that comes with this performance.

### Ambition

For Sancheziey, the ‘Kusile Kwetfu Cultural Celebration’ represents a platform for growth and learning. “I’m very happy, and I perceive it as an on-ground learning experience,” he said. Sancheziey emphasised that his performance extends beyond personal ambition; it is also a reflection of his identity and a voice for his fellow emaSwati.

“I am going there for emaSwati; every bit of what I will do on and off stage will reflect emaSwati and, more especially, the Salukazana family,” he asserted. This commitment to representing his culture and community adds a layer of responsibility to his performance, as he aims to showcase the rich heritage of Eswatini to a broader audience.

The Kusile Kwetfu Cultural Celebration presents a unique opportunity for Sancheziey to enhance his brand and expand his reach within the music industry. He recognised that participating in international shows is crucial for his growth as an artist. “Such international shows will be beneficial to the growth of the brand because they’ll sharpen my stage presence,” he explained.



# King Monada loses another court battle to refund promoter

INCORRIGIBLE no-show addict King Monada has lost another lawsuit emanating from his refusal to refund a promoter after failing to show up at the impresario’s music event about two years ago.

Sunday World can exclusively reveal that the Nkowankowa Magistrate’s Court in Limpopo has ruled in favour of promoter Eric Thoka and ordered King Monada to refund him R49 000 plus the legal costs.

Thoka confirmed that he won the suit against King Monada, real name Khutso Steven

Kgatla, but said that, given the recording superstar’s unbridled hubris, he is expecting him to appeal that judgement.

“The matter was heard on July 25, and the court ruled in our favour and ordered him to refund us.

“But given his arrogance, I would not be surprised if he appeals the judgement because he did not even show up in court.

“Only his lawyer did. King Monada was only giving the lawyer instructions via the phone,” he said.

Thoka also said that the judgment has vindicated him and will silence the loquacious critics who accused him of lying about booking the artist as a marketing coup. “It’s a pity it had to go this far, but this was not personal. It was a principled business decision to recoup our money after he humiliated us by not showing up at the event after we

paid him,” he said.

Thoka said that the damage King Moanda has caused to his reputation was so immeasurable that he would not risk booking him again for events in the future.

“I will never book him. I want to appeal to other artists, especially from Limpopo, to please take their business seriously. Honour your contract, and if you fail to honour it, pay back the money. It’s that simple,” he said.

According to the summons which Thoka obtained under his company, Monate Africa, the Idibala hitmaker refused to refund him after failing to pitch up at a music festival in December 2023.

Thoka had paid the Skabhora Moreki hitmaker a substantial sum to perform for the kings and queens of Lebowakgomo township, near Polokwane, on New Year’s Day in 2023.

He explained that after paying the artist, they printed posters and flyers and distributed them to promote and market the show.

As a result, he said, Monada’s supporters bought tickets in droves to come and rub shoulders with the object of their obsession.

But to their disappointment, Monada did not show up, prompting the supporters to take to social media, accusing Thoka of lying to them that he had booked the icon to entertain them at the carnival.

“On the day he was due to perform, we called him to find out his whereabouts. He



▲ no-show addict King Monada has lost another lawsuit emanating from his refusal to refund a promoter after failing to show up at the impresario’s music event about two years ago.

replied by saying that he was in Pretoria, apparently attending another gig, and promised to come to our show on time,” Thoka said.

He said that when they realised that King Monada’s time to perform was approaching, they called him again, but the artist’s phone was off.

Thoka then said Monada complained that they had made him a headline act for their show but short-changed him by not paying the fee befitting the billing.

Thoka said after promising to refund them, King Monada stopped taking their calls until his manager, Albert Makwela, intervened and promised to resolve the matter. “But after several months of not getting our money back, we decided to go the legal route.”

Last year, Limpopo Artists Movement chairperson Mphoza Mashabela successfully sued King Monada because he failed to pitch at an event he organised to honour legendary artists and refused to refund him.



## ESWATINI DAIRY BOARD

### DAIRY CATTLE FARMING COURSE

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

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

**E500.00 per person for the whole session**  
Please register and pay at the Dairy Board Office

**For more details please contact the following board’s officer:**  
Mr. Bandile Mdluli (Course Coordinator) - **(+268) 7662 4422**  
Or call the Office @ - **(+268) 2505 8262/3**

**BY MANAGEMENT**



## 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 outlook, 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 Mnsi**  
GOVERNOR



www.centralbank.org.sz







FLOSSING may be a simple way to lower your risk of certain forms of cardiovascular disease, including stroke.

Cardiovascular disease, including stroke, remains the number one cause of death for Americans.

New research suggests that flossing and maintaining good oral health may help mitigate the risk of AFib and blood clot-related stroke.

Flossing is a simple, inexpensive habit that can easily be added to a daily routine.

Cardiovascular disease, including stroke, remains the leading cause of death in the United States, according to the latest data from the American Heart Association (AHA).

Lifestyle interventions, including healthy dietary changes and regular exercise, are some of the most effective methods of prevention against cardiovascular disease (CVD).

A lesser-known tactic involves a secret weapon you might already have in your medicine cabinet: dental floss.

Flossing should be part of any regular oral care routine, but it could also have significant beneficial effects on heart and brain health.

New research shows that regular flossing was associated with a significantly lower risk of certain forms of stroke and atrial fibrillation (AFib). The findings are being presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2025 this week.

"We have known that gum disease and dental caries are risk factors for stroke and heart attack. Flossing is already known to reduce the rate of heart attack," Souvik Sen, MD, MPH, chair of the Department of Neurology, Prisma Health Richland Hospital and the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, and author of the research, told Healthline.

"Our research suggests that dental flossing can reduce the risk of stroke, and higher frequency of flossing leads to further reduction of stroke."

#### Flossing may lower risk of stroke, AFib

Researchers analyzed the data of more than 6,000 participants in the ongoing Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) cohort study, which began in 1987. The study utilizes a comprehensive questionnaire to assess various lifestyle factors and behaviors on atherosclerosis (narrowing of the arteries).

Sen and his team were specifically interested in the association of flossing, independent of other oral care factors such as brushing and regular dentist visits, on cardiovascular disease outcomes.

About 65% of the cohort (4,092) reported flossing. Over a 25-year follow-up period, 434 participants experienced strokes, with 97 of those identified as a specific subtype called a cardioembolic stroke, in which a blood clot travels from the heart to the brain.

Compared to those who did not report flossing, flossers experienced a 22% lower risk of ischemic stroke and a 44% lower risk of cardioembolic stroke.

Flossing was also associated with a 12% lower risk of atrial fibrillation, the most common form of irregular heartbeat. AFib is also the leading cause of cardioembolic strokes.

"There is an increasing awareness of the role of inflammation in the development of AFib and it will be interesting to have more



# Regular flossing linked to better heart health

research into this association and, if true, the potential mechanism," Rod Passman, MD, a professor of medicine and director of the Center for Arrhythmia Research at Northwestern University who wasn't affiliated with the research, told Healthline.

"Studies like this are limited by the self-reporting and the potential for confounders — do people who floss also engage in other activities that may be good for their heart that may not be measured in the study," Passman cautioned.

#### Oral health, inflammation, and heart disease

The mechanism for why flossing may reduce stroke risk isn't yet certain, but researchers are honing in on the role of

inflammation as a risk factor for heart disease.

"Oral health behaviors are linked to inflammation and artery hardening. Flossing may reduce stroke risk by lowering oral infections and inflammation and encouraging other healthy habits," said Sen.

Periodontitis is an inflammatory disease of the gums that can lead to chronic inflammation.

As with other forms of inflammation, evidence suggests that periodontitis may be linked to cardiovascular disease. The link also suggests that good oral health habits like brushing and flossing may be a potential lifestyle factor for reducing cardiovascular disease risk.

Researchers investigated additional links

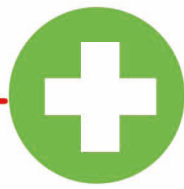
between oral health, the gut, and stroke risk and presented their findings this week at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference.

Lead researcher Shuichi Tonomura, MD, staff physician in the department of neurology at the National Cerebral and Cardiovascular Center in Osaka, Japan, identified an apparent association between the presence of the bacteria *Streptococcus anginosus* and stroke.

*Streptococcus anginosus* commonly lives in both the oral and gut microbiota, but Tonomura and his team found that it was abundant in the gut of stroke survivors.

In fact, the amount of *streptococcus anginosus* in the saliva and the gut was associated with both a higher risk of stroke and worse outcomes, including death and





other major cardiovascular events, following a stroke.

“I want to propose that examining gut microbiota patterns has been suggested to be potentially useful for assessing stroke risk and prognosis,” Tonomura told Healthline.

Both Tonomura and Sen’s research highlights the complex relationship between oral health and cardiovascular disease, and points to new areas for research into prevention.

Tonomura suggested that Streptococcus anginosus could one day serve as a biomarker to help determine stroke risk and that targeting harmful bacteria through proper oral health strategies could lower your risk of stroke.

According to Sen, regular flossing may also be a relatively easy way to improve oral health and also help prevent cardiovascular disease.

“Dental flossing could be an added and inexpensive health behavior one could adapt to prevent one from having a stroke,” said Sen.

Tips to reduce cardiovascular disease risk

Doctors attributed nearly 1 million deaths to cardiovascular disease in 2022, the most recent year included in the AHA’s 2025 annual report on heart disease and stroke.

To put that in more concrete terms: on average, one person in the U.S. dies from CVD every 34 seconds.

“Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, a trend that has persisted for over a century,” corresponding author Latha P. Palaniappan, MD, FAHA, a professor of cardiovascular medicine at Stanford Medicine, told Healthline.

Cardiovascular disease is responsible for more deaths than all forms of cancer and accidental death (which includes drug overdose and car accidents) — the number two and three causes of death in the U.S. — combined.

Making meaningful, actionable changes to improve your overall health can help reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease. For better heart health, Palaniappan suggested following the AHA’s Life’s Essential 8 checklist:

- ▶ Eat better
- ▶ Be more active
- ▶ Quit tobacco
- ▶ Get healthy sleep
- ▶ Manage weight
- ▶ Control cholesterol
- ▶ Manage blood sugar
- ▶ Manage blood pressure

Takeaway

Cardiovascular disease, including stroke, remains the leading cause of death for Americans. Modifiable risk factors, including diet and exercise, continue to play a crucial role in lowering your risk.

Researchers are focusing on the role of poor oral health as a potential risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Conversely, good oral health habits, such as flossing, may reduce your risk, new research suggests.

Flossing may be a simple, inexpensive way to lower your risk of certain forms of cardiovascular disease, like AFib and stroke. **Healthline**

# The 6-6-6 walking challenge

THE 6-6-6 walking challenge involves a 60 minute walk at either 6 a.m or 6 p.m with an additional 6 minutes each for warmup and cooldown.

The 6-6-6 walking trend is a new, low-impact exercise trend.

It comes after the 12-3-30 trend, which involves walking at a 12 percent incline for 30 minutes at a 3 mile per hour pace on a treadmill.

I tried the 6-6-6 workout for a week. Keep reading for my honest thoughts on the workout below.

How to do the 6-6-6 walking workout

Warmup: Walk for 6 minutes at a slow pace to ease into the workout.

Workout: Walk for 60 minutes at a brisk pace that you are able to maintain without stopping.

Cooldown: Walk for 6 minutes at a slow pace to conclude your workout.

As on optional step, you may consider stretching before your warmup and after your cooldown.

The setup

I thought it would be important to share my circumstances before I dive into my review.

Where I live, the sun has not yet risen at 6 a.m. and has already set by 6 p.m. Temperatures routinely dip below freezing when the sun is down. To avoid freezing to death, I completed this challenge on a walking pad.

However, you don’t have to use a walking pad to complete this workout — it can be done virtually anywhere. Some places you may consider are:

- ▶ a greenway or nature trail
- ▶ on a treadmill at the gym
- ▶ an indoor track
- ▶ outside of your office building

I also attend a Pilates class most mornings, so for consistency’s sake, I chose 6 p.m. as my workout time.

Did you lose weight?

As I was only able to do this trend for one week, I did not notice any significant changes in my weight.

Weight can fluctuate day-to-day and even week-to-week for a number of reasons, and everybody is different. While this may not have had any particular effect on me, it could lead to different results for you.

If you are trying to lose weight, losing one to two poundsTrusted Source per week is generally considered safe. It is important to talk to your doctor about your weight loss goals before making any drastic changes to your diet and exercise habits.

If you’re just starting out

If you are new to exercising, you do not have to complete the entire 60 minutes the



first time. You can start out with 30 minutes, or however much time you can complete, and work your way up from there.

Did it affect your mood?

I felt that this challenge had a positive effect on my mood.

Since my start time was at 6 p.m., it gave me time to decompress from work. I could catch up with friends, hang out with my cat, and otherwise separate myself from my working mindset before I started.

I find that I am usually tired after work, so I had to motivate myself a little to actually get up and start the workout. However, once I started walking, I enjoyed it.

After the walk, I felt a little happier and less tired. I could jump into making dinner and other evening household tasks in a better mood compared to my usual post-work routine of sitting on the couch and doom scrolling.

Do you have any tips for motivation?

During my workout, I watched shows that nobody else wants to watch with me (specifically The Legend of Korra, if anyone is interested.)

One of the reasons I looked forward to the workout was because I could watch my show. I did not watch it at any other point in my

day — even if the last episode ended on a cliffhanger — reserving it specifically for the workout.

I’m not saying you have to watch a show to do this workout, but pairing the walking with another habit helped. To me, an hour is a long time to focus on one thing.

If you are like me and need another form of stimulation, you may consider pairing your walk with a:

- ▶ podcast
- ▶ breathing exercise
- ▶ meditation

You could also ask a friend or family member to do this challenge with you. That way, you can hold each other accountable and keep each other company during your walk.

Would you recommend this exercise? Yes!

Takeaway

The 6-6-6 walking trend is an exercise routine that is easy to incorporate into your daily routine. Since it can be done at either 6 a.m. or 6 p.m., you can fit the workout in before things get busy during the day.

After doing this challenge for a week, I can say that my mood and energy levels have improved. However, for me personally, I did not notice a change in weight.

It is important to talk to your doctor before making any changes to your exercise routine. **Healthline**



# Duze High's Silindelewena Dlongolo triumphs in Rubicon Essay Writing Competition

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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DUZE High School's Silindelewena Dlongolo has emerged as the winner of the Rubicon Essay Writing Competition, achieving an impressive aggregate score of 89 per cent.

This awards event, held at Ramblas Restaurant, showcased the talents of young writers across the country and culminated in a celebration of creativity and intellect. Dlongolo received an HP laptop courtesy of Computronics Systems.

In a closely contested competition, second place was awarded to Aphiwe Mabuza from Sisekelo High School, who scored 88 per cent and took home a tablet smartphone. The third position went to Sakhelwe Mdzembe from St. Francis, who achieved a score of 79 per cent and received a smartphone. To add to the excitement, Dlongolo also clinched the People's Choice Award for the most voted article, which included a hamper prize.

Nkosinathi Dlamini, Service Contracts Manager at Computronics Systems, expressed his congratulations to the winners of the competition. He acknowledged the significant pressure involved but praised the students for their resilience and determination. Dlamini highlighted the achievement of the top three students, all of whom were girls, emphasising his commitment to empowering young women. He encouraged them to pursue careers in Information Technology, reinforcing the notion that this field is not solely for males.

Hlobisile Stromvig, Managing Director of Imisebe Publishing, also recognised the importance of the competition. She thanked Rubicon Media Group for promoting a culture of reading and writing through the initiative. "Part of our mandate is to emphasise the culture of reading, writing, and researching," she stated. Stromvig



▲ Nkosinathi Dlamini, Service Contracts Manager at Computronics Systems, Rubicon Media Editor Lwazi Dlamini, Ministry of Education and Training Acting Principal Secretary Dr Tholakele Mngometulu, Hlobisile Stromvig, Managing Director of Imisebe Publishing with the three winners Sakhelwe Mdzembe (3rd place), Silindelewena Dlongolo (1st place), and Aphiwe Mabuza (2nd place).

expressed her belief that these students represent the future literary talents, likening them to the William Shakespeare of tomorrow.

During the awards ceremony, Rubicon Media Group CEO Karabo Ngoepe, represented by editor Lwazi Dlamini, expressed his enthusiasm for the competition and its impact on the participants. "It is an honour to stand before you today as a representative of the CEO of Rubicon Media Group, a company born from the visionary leadership of His Majesty King Mswati III, who aspires to see Eswatini transformed into a first-world nation," he stated.

He emphasised the significance of education, echoing the sentiments of His Majesty King Mswati III, who, in his Speech From The Throne, declared, "Education remains the bedrock of any nation. An educated and well-in-

formed nation is likely to succeed in all its endeavours." This underscores the essential role education plays in fostering national development and prosperity.

The Rubicon Essay Writing Competition brought together twelve schools, each represented by two talented students from Form 3 and Form 4. The competition culminated in an exhilarating showdown among the top four contenders. Ngoepe highlighted that the competition was not merely a platform for showcasing writing skills but also a transformative experience for all participants.

"The competition has significantly benefited our students in various ways," he explained.

- **Enhanced Writing Skills:** Through the rigorous process of crafting essays, students honed their writing abilities, learning to articulate their thoughts clearly and

persuasively. This skill is invaluable, as effective communication is essential in any field they choose to pursue.

- **Critical Thinking Development:** The competition challenged students to think critically about various topics, encouraging them to analyse issues from multiple perspectives. This nurtures a mindset that is essential for problem-solving and innovation.
- **Confidence Building:** Participating in a competitive environment fosters self-confidence. Students learned to present their ideas in front of a panel of judges, which included educators and professionals from the media industry. This experience will serve them well in future endeavours, both academically and professionally.
- **wExposure to Diverse Perspectives:** The competition attracted a diverse group of participants, allowing students to engage with different viewpoints. This exposure is vital for fostering open-mindedness and cultural understanding, traits that are increasingly important in our interconnected world.

Ngoepe further articulated that the Rubicon Essay Writing Competition aligns with the core values of the organisation: agility, accountability, commitment, teamwork, and embracing change. "By investing in students, we are investing in the future of Eswatini and the continent," he remarked.

Looking ahead, Ngoepe reiterated Rubicon's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering a culture of excellence. "Our vision as Africa's Integrated Business Partner is to create synergies that enhance collaboration across sectors, empowering businesses and individuals to thrive in a dynamic environment," he stated.

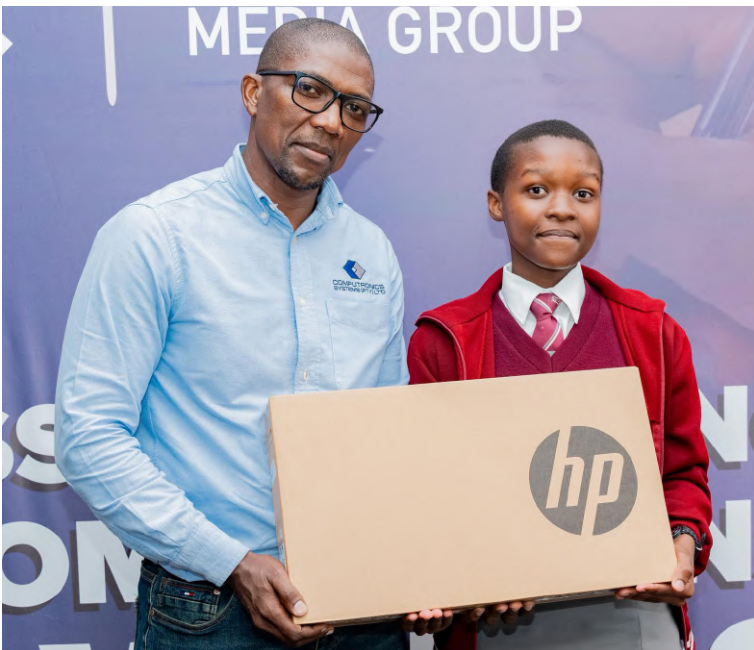
He believes that initiatives like the Rubicon Essay Writing Competition will empower youth to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.

## The evolution of education in the digital world

NAME: SILINDELEWENA DLONGOLO  
SCHOOL: DUZE HIGH SCHOOL

According to the Longman dictionary, evolution is the gradual change and development of an idea, situation or object. Education is the act of teaching and receiving knowledge from one person to another ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)). The evolution of education in the digital world, particularly through online learning platforms and technological advancements, has significantly reshaped how education is delivered and accessed. The ways in which online learning platforms and technological advancements have changed education will be presented in this essay including its benefits and drawbacks.

Firstly, online platforms and technological advancements have changed education by providing access to information and resources. Educational resources such as lectures and tutorials are widely available to anyone with an internet connection. Platforms like YouTube and SparkNotes provide crucial information from experts around the globe. Even on the television, we have learning channels such as Mindset channel which covers subjects like Mathematics, Physical Science, etc. This has made learning much easier and fun by providing flexible learning, allowing students to access lessons at their own pace and schedule. From the internet, students are able to download Portable Document Formats (PDF) and videos to utilize at a time convenient to them. Such is even observed at our University of Eswatini. It provides



lectures on Moodle, an online platform that permits learners from assorted backgrounds to receive high-quality education that they may have not accessed before due to geographical barriers. Additionally, the digital world has greatly transformed education by promoting personalized and collaborative learning at the lowest possible cost. As stated by the [www.infosysbpm.com](http://www.infosysbpm.com), the artificial intelligence (AI) and adaptive learning platforms personalize education by allowing students to learn at their own pace and according to their own learning styles. AI

does not require one to rephrase a question as one would a teacher, but it gives them the privilege to ask it in a way that suits them. Also, discussion forums and group chats on the internet enable students to engage with peers and instructors from around the world. For example, on Telegram we have the Grasshopper group which connects teachers and students from various schools globally. Many students create their own WhatsApp group chats with their teachers and peers which gives them ample time to discuss, beyond the classroom.

Through these online connections between students and instructors, information is at one's fingertips, thus geographical and financial barriers are reduced. This vividly shows how the digital world has transformed education in terms of global access and cost-effectiveness. The evolution of education through online learning platforms has had positive outcomes. Primarily, convenience, inclusivity, cost effectiveness and accessibility. Students can access learning materials at their own pace and time, therefore, assisting in balancing education with other commitments. This further offers a variety of learning styles along with increased technological abilities, a vital skill in today's world. Physically challenged learners who were previously sidelined educationally are now easily homeschooled through platforms like Google meet, Zoom, etc. All this is achieved at reasonably affordable costs. As many say, 'every light has its shadow,' likewise, online learning has negative effects. The major one being lack of social interaction. Online learning can deprive students and instructors of face-to-face interaction, a crucial element in improving mental health ([hello4health.org](http://hello4health.org)). Lack of social connection can lead to struggles such as depression as people cannot connect physically with friends to vent to due to the isolation brought by online learning. Another disadvantage of online learning is that it requires self-discipline. Learning online demands, a higher level of self-motivation and time management skills. This has proved to be challenging for students, especially during the covid-19 pandemic. A huge number of students failed to submit assignments within

allocated time due to failure to balance schoolwork with other commitments. Furthermore, financial barriers add on the negative effects of online learning. Some students may lack access to reliable internet connections, quality devices, even devices themselves. Taking in consideration that in Eswatini, approximately 59% of the population live below poverty line, this population does not have access to the internet, worsening inequality as information is accessed only by privileged individuals. Moreover, having limited hands-on learning is another shortcoming of online learning. It does not address all fields. For example, medical or technical fields such as engineering requires one to attend a physical class. This is because online education may not provide the practical experience which is necessary for skill development. The absence of reliability adds on the bad side of online learning. One cannot be sure if online universities are legit. They may find themselves wasting their time and money on bogus universities or online platforms offering courses of way less quality than traditional institutions. In conclusion, online learning platforms and technological advancements have modified education, providing access and flexibility. However, they have brought difficulties such as lack of social connection and limited hands-on learning. Luckily, balancing the benefits with the drawbacks is essential for shaping the future of education in the digital world.



The Evolution of Education in The Digital World

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SISEKELO HIGH SCHOOL

The field of education has changed dramatically in the digital era, with technology influencing how students acquire knowledge and how teachers facilitate learning. This essay will investigate the significant changes brought about by technology in education, examining both the benefits and drawbacks presented by this changing environment.

The initial development in educational technology in the sub-Saharan region can be traced back to the 1960s, with the emergence of computer-assisted instruction. However, it was not until the late 1990s and early 2000s that online learning genuinely began to thrive, spurred by the growth of the internet. The proliferation of high-speed internet prompted the rise of Virtual learning environments and interactive platforms, offering more engaging and effective methods for students to learn. Over time, the notion of online learning gained traction, and the COVID-19 pandemic played a further role in driving the global shift to online learning as educational institutions rushed to ensure continuity in education during extensive lockdowns.

One of the most prominent changes introduced by technology in education is the incorporation of 3D models and computer-generated wall charts in conventional classrooms. This implementation has proven to enhance interactive and engaging learning experiences in educational settings. In 2022, an article by SpringOpen confirmed that dynamic visualization (including 3D models and animations) greatly boosted intrinsic motivation for learning subjects like chemistry, biology, and geography among students aged 11 to 19 years. These 3D models and animations offer a concrete representation of intricate concepts, making it simpler for students to understand, whether it



involves visualizing the structure of the human body or examining chemical elements. Through 3D models, students experience a more immersive and interactive form of learning. With these tools, students can now engage with their subjects in a considerably more dynamic and visual way.

Additionally, online tools and educational content have promoted collaborative learning, encouraging the development of advanced thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership abilities. Research conducted by Cornell University indicates that learning experiences that are active, social,

engaging, and owned by students lead to a deeper grasp and understanding. Thanks to the accessibility provided by online tools and educational content, learners from various locations and backgrounds can obtain quality education at affordable prices and interact with one another as if they were in the same space. This interaction is facilitated through various online learning platforms that offer instant messaging and video conferencing features, like Google Classroom and Zoom, where students can connect with peers from around the globe, acquiring insights that might be unavailable in a traditional

classroom environment.

Furthermore, online learning platforms and technology offer significant flexibility that traditional systems often do not provide. Flexibility in education allows students to decide when, where, and how they learn, making education more accessible than ever before. Platforms like Khan Academy and YouTube grant students – particularly those in university or pursuing further studies – full control and responsibility for their learning. For instance, a student who works during the day can allocate their evenings to study and learn. Students can access learning materials anytime, day or night, accommodating education around their existing commitments, whether work, family responsibilities, or extracurricular activities.

Despite the many advantages of educational technology, there are also challenges, such as its potential to diminish social or face-to-face interactions. Many students find it simpler to communicate behind a screen rather than in person, which can lead to discomfort in real-life interactions later on. Research conducted by Frontiersin.org indicated that most students felt online learning was less engaging as they could not connect with their peers or lecturers, leading to feelings of self-isolation. They missed the spontaneous discussions and collaborations that are typical in a traditional classroom environment. Traditional classrooms enable students to engage directly with peers and lecturers. With a rise in online learning, students may also lose the opportunity to develop essential communication skills and confidence. In summary, this could hinder their ability to build relationships both now and in the future.

Moreover, technology in education can also play a role in cyberbullying. The extensive use of smartphones and laptops in schools can increase the chances for bullying, as many educational institutions have embraced technology by integrating devices into the classroom. While

this strategy aims to improve learning experiences, it also provides students with constant access to communication tools and social media platforms. This may encourage them to say things they would not express in person. For example, during class time, students might use their devices to share inappropriate content with their peers. This can lead to a hostile classroom environment, distracting them from education and impacting students' overall well-being.

In conclusion, online learning platforms and technological advancements have significantly transformed education, presenting both considerable benefits and notable challenges. It is essential for educational institutions to remain vigilant regarding the digital divide and the changing roles of educators and students as education continues to evolve. The ongoing development and incorporation of technology will undoubtedly further revolutionize education in the years ahead.

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The Evolution Of Education In The Digital World

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Over the years, technology has played a pivotal role in modifying the scholastic realm, making learning more accessible, interactive and efficient.

The knotty question is, how exactly has technology modified education ? This essay explores the transfiguration of education in the digital age, the positive aspects and downsides brought forth by this change.

A study by the Research Institute of America shows that students retain 25 – 60% more information through online learning compared to just 8 – 10% in traditional classrooms, proving the transformative power of technology in education. Education was predominantly confined to a physical classroom with a rigid approach where the focus was on systematic or routinely learning. This included lectures, note-taking, memorization, tests, and examinations to obtain theoretical knowledge using paper - based textbooks and chalkboards as tools. Traditional education had limitations such as only a fraction of global population had access to quality education due to geographic, social, and economic barriers .

Moreover, students were heavily reliant on teachers as solitary sources of information, and there were standardized curriculums that didn't cater to individual learning needs.

In the 1980s - 1990s, computers, tablets, and projectors were introduced in schools marking the first steps of integrating technology in education. The computers and tablets with internet access replaced bulkier hardcopy textbooks with



digital ones which were more portable and multilingual. Additionally , there was the surfacing of educational applications and web tools like Google Scholar and online libraries which presented immeasurable amounts of academic material. Moreover, Artificial Intelligence provided virtual tutors which give instant feedback, support and do administrative tasks like grading tests and making notes, liberating teachers for more personalized student interactions. Furthermore, were multimedia tools such as slide decks, infographics, podcasts, videos, and presentations to enhance understanding by making

complex concepts more interactive and visual.

As a result, students began metamorphosing from passive learning to active participation through collaborative projects, online forums, and digital resources. Also, the responsibility of teachers matured from just providing and unpacking information to being facilitators of knowledge, prompting exploration, problem solving skills, and critical thinking.

Undoubtedly, this sea change in education through technology has brought forth several benefits . Firstly, online learning platforms like edX offer

courses taught by professors from prestigious universities making world class education within the grasp of students globally, meaning students from developing countries like Eswatini get the same resources as those in developed countries like Japan. Also, working professionals could upskill or reskill without disrupting their current jobs through flexible online learning programs, addressing the demands of a rapidly changing job market.

Moreover, a plethora of online platforms like Eswatini Learning Passport provide free or low cost learning resources such as eBooks, lesson plans, and video lectures, making online learning cost efficient.

Furthermore, technological advancements like AI powered applications such as Duolingo adjust content based on individual student progress and needs, and ensure engagement through gamification which are interactive quizzes, games, and rewards to boost motivation and retention.

Also, assisting technologies like text-speech software and screen readers make education accessible to students with disabilities, ensuring that no one is left out.

Moreover, immersion technologies such as Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality enhance understanding through simulations and interactive environments for an example, medical students can practice surgeries in a Virtual Reality simulation without risk to real patients or history students can take a virtual trip to ancient Egypt while in class. Lastly, online platforms ensure uninterrupted learning during natural disasters, political instability, and pandemics, like during the COVID 19 pandemic when 1.5 billion students around the world according to UNESCO were engaged in remote learning using platforms like Google

Classroom, ensuring education continued regardless of the global shutdown.

Despite having numerous positives, this transformation in education through technology also has drawbacks. For one, not all students have access to reliable and robust internet, digital devices and resources, leading to educational inequalities. Also, online education may lead to a lack of in-person interactions with peers and teachers, which is crucial for developing communication and interpersonal skills. Moreover, prolonged use of digital devices can lead to eye strain, headaches and reduced physical activity causing burnout or physical discomfort. Furtherly, some employers may view online degrees as less credible than those from traditional institutions which may make an online acquired degree hold little value in the job market.

To add on that, there is a high online learning drop-out rate because of the lack of discipline and dependence on self motivation, so students may struggle to complete online courses.

Lastly, online platforms store astronomic amounts of personal data, making them vulnerable to cyber attacks which expose sensitive information about students and staff.

Ultimately, the digital world has redefined education, making it more accessible, flexible, personalized, and inclusive.

As we move forward, it is essential that we balance the benefits with solutions to these drawbacks to maximize the potential of technology in education.



# Lewandowski, Yamal fined anti doping violations

FC Barcelona is facing a scandal right now, that dates back to their last Champions League match. The club struggled then on the pitch and now off it, as two of the most important players were sanctioned.

This decision came out today and was made by UEFA's Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body (CEDB) after its meeting on July 31, 2025, where they issued several sanctions to Barça from their match played against Inter Milan.

Robert Lewandowski and Lamine Yamal were fined €5,000 each for failing to arrive on time at the post-match doping control. UEFA said the fines were based on breaches of articles 21.8 and 21.10(a) which state players are to present themselves to the doping control area "immediately" after the conclusion of a match.

The fines are serious but it's important to note that they are only based on procedural breaches, so no evidence or suspicion of doping substances was found. It's simply that UEFA has enforced its anti-doping protocols with little tolerance and shown the importance of being fully cooperative. (MSN)



▲Lamine Yamal and Robert Lewandowski.



▲Crystal Palace players celebrate winning the Community Shield.

## New-look Liverpool humbled by Crystal Palace in Community Shield

CRYSTAL Palace twice came from behind to stun a new-look Liverpool and win the Community Shield for the first time on penalties after a 2-2 draw at Wembley on Sunday.

New signings Hugo Ekitike and Jeremie Frimpong scored for the Premier League champions, but Palace responded through Jean-Philippe Mateta and Ismaila Sarr before winning an error-strewn shootout 3-2.

Mohamed Salah blazed over from the spot, while Alexis Mac Allister and Harvey Elliott were denied by an inspired Dean Henderson

as Palace built on winning their first ever major trophy by beating Manchester City in May's FA Cup final.

The traditional curtain-raiser to the English football season was given extra significance after a summer marked by tragedy for Liverpool. Forward Diogo Jota was killed in a car accident alongside his brother Andre Silva.

Reds legend Ian Rush and Palace chairman Steve Parish laid wreaths on the side of the pitch before kick-off, while the Liverpool end was awash with banners and flags paying tribute to the Portuguese international.

A minute's silence, however, had to be cut short due to disturbances in the crowd.

Jota's death has dampened the excitement over Liverpool's transfer spending spree to build on a squad that romped to a record-equalling 20th league title last season.

All four of their new signings at a cost of £260 million – Ekitike, Florian Wirtz, Frimpong and Milos Kerkez – started.

Ekitike's role this season could depend on whether Liverpool are successful in their pursuit of Newcastle striker Alexander Isak.

(Super Sport)

## LeBron describes first meeting with Michael Jordan

LEBRON James has already experienced many memorable moments throughout his illustrious career.

Among those was the very first time he met Michael Jordan in person. It was in 2001 that 16-year-old James finally got the chance to meet his idol.

As expected, LeBron described the feeling of being in front of Jordan as incredible and almost holy, like witnessing something unreal.

"It was godly," James said of meeting Jordan during an interview in 2018. "I've said that over and over before, but it was like meeting God for the first time. That's what I felt like as a 16-year-old kid when I met MJ."

It's hard to tell whether a stroke of luck or destiny made James and Jordan cross paths. However, what would always remain a fact is that history was made when the two met each other in '01. At the time, MJ was getting back in shape as he geared up for his second and final NBA return. James was one of the fortunate youngsters invited to join the camp and share the court with his NBA hero.

To this day, LeBron still vividly recalls the elation and the outburst of adrenaline he felt when he was called up to finally step onto the court. As far back as James can remember, he and Jordan made a great tandem and were unbeatable throughout that camp.

"They didn't let me play for like a first hour," James once recalled. "The only reason I played is because the guys that was in the league, you know, after a few hours some of them get tired, they're like, 'I'm done with this sh\*t, hey young fella, we need a fill, you wanna play?'"

"We used to play around 9 p.m.," he continued. "The camp would end, and we would stay along with the college kids that he would invite to the games as well. We would get a good-ass run in for a good hour, hour 15. I was on the team with MJ, and we didn't lose a game. "For me to be on the court at 16 years old, a sophomore in high school, with my favorite player of all time, it was like, this can't be real, man," he reflected. "If you pinch me, I hope I don't wake up."

"They didn't let me play for like a first hour," James once recalled. "The only reason I played is because the guys that was in the league, you know, after a few hours some of them get tired, they're like, 'I'm done with this sh\*t, hey young fella, we need a fill, you wanna play?'"

(Super Sport)



▲Basketball player LeBron James.



Stories by Chris Dlamini

# Bring golf to schools, I'll back it up – Minister Owen

FROM one big FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025 to yet another exciting challenge. The bar has been set and it is now upon the Eswatini Golf Union (EGU) to face the latest challenge. Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo, on Saturday, challenged the country's golf custodians to introduce the sport in schools for its development.

"After seeing the success of the 2025 FNB Eswatini Challenge, I'm convinced that we need this sport at the grassroots level, and that is in our schools. Please ensure you bring it to our schools for its development. You do that, I, as Education Minister, will be there to back it up," declared Nxumalo, much to a huge round of applause in approval.

Nxumalo challenged the EGU and Eswatini Professional Golfers Association (EPGA) to make his dream come true, especially because he would be there to assist in making it happen. Nxumalo said golf was one of the sports that would change lives and the country's economy positively.

The minister represented the Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Minister Bongani Nzima in the awards ceremony of the FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025 at Ezulwini Golf and Country Club on Saturday. He presented the new champion from South Africa (SA), Michael Hollick with his trophy and replica cheque of E317 000, while the FNB Eswatini

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thokozeni 'TK' Dlamini also presented the special jacket by local designer Sgonian Republik to the champion.

"Let me take this moment to congratulate the champion. He has done well and we hope he will return next month for the King's Cup Golf 2025, and further defend his title next year," Nxumalo said on behalf of Nzima.

He did not stop there but also congratulated the top three Eswatini golfers who were led by James Pennington, the only LiSwati to make it to the top 50 out of over 120 professionals from around the globe.

"FNB Eswatini has specially added E60 000 for the best three local golfers to motivate them. On top of this, the best LiSwati, James Pennington will get an extra E30 000 from FNB for reaching the top 50. Congratulations to him and the rest of the local golfers for doing us proud. We hope next time we can have a title winner," said Nxumalo.

Pennington was presented with his winnings on the spot as well. The other two shining emaSwati were Mandla Junior (MJ) Dlamini and Brendon Rennie who earned E20 000, and E10 000 respectively.



▲ Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo.



## 'Make 2026 FNB Challenge bigger, better'

WITH the 2025 FNB Eswatini Challenge done and dusted, eyes are already on the fifth edition next year.

This year's theme, Transforming fairways and futures was well cemented as everything was just on point about the tournament, from organisation to the course maintenance and job creation for locals.

The tournament came alongside the sponsor, FNB Eswatini's 30th anniversary celebration, making it special as it felt so for all.

"As we bring down the curtain on this year's edition, I am leaving you, CEO, with one challenge: Make the 2026 FNB Eswatini Challenge even bigger and better!" said Nxumalo.

He also congratulated the bank and staff for 'staging a brilliant FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025'.

"I should thank you CEO, and the entire FNB Eswatini family, for ensuring that the impact of the tournament is felt across Eswatini," said the minister. He further expressed his appreciation for the businesses that partnered with FNB Eswatini to



▲ Champion Michael Hollick displaying his prize next to minister Nxumalo and FNB CEO Thokozeni Dlamini.

ensure a smooth tournament while also appealing to others to take a leaf from the bank and join forces with sports. "As we have seen during this Challenge, Eswatini can host world-class sporting events. Indeed, Eswatini is open for business. To our

international players and guests, it has been an honour to welcome and host you in our beautiful Kingdom," said Nxumalo. He appealed to the internationals to be now ambassadors of Eswatini and return with their families to visit, not just as golfers.

## E60k practice spots boosted local golfers – FNB CEO

AN extra E60 000 was paid by FNB Eswatini to enhance local professionals' performance in the FNB Eswatini Golf Challenge 2025.

Did it work? The response is a big yes. They performed better and beat some of the top-tier and well-travelled golfers from various parts of the globe.

FNB Eswatini's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thokozeni 'TK' Dlamini made special mention of the practice opportunity given to the local professional golfers who qualified for this year's Sunshine Tour implemented golf tournament.

"At FNB Eswatini, we don't just invest in sport; we invest in people, progress and the future. We are proud to have extended an additional E60 000 towards free practice sessions for our local professional golfers. Over the course of the tournament, we have seen how this investment translated enhanced performance, confidence and pride on the course.

"To our local stars, you have made us proud, and we hope the extra E60 000 worth of cash prizes, which will be shared by the top three emaSwati are already meaningful recognition of your effort," said Dlamini.

He said that as they had been saying throughout the year, "Sitintile Eswatini, futsi

asiyindzawo (We are in Eswatini to stay and not going anywhere)", they will continue to back their commitment to Eswatini with actions, actions that communities and the people.

"We are incredibly proud to host a truly international fairway, with players from across the globe joining us here in Ezulwini. This did not only make for excellent viewing on the course, but this flagship tournament boosted local tourism, small businesses, and brought communities together," said Dlamini.

He also appreciated all their partners who contributed in various ways to make this edition a tremendous success. These are Sunshine Tour, Eswatini Golf Union (EGU), Eswatini Professional Golfers Association (EPGA), Old Mutual, Dixie's International, AD Enterprises, Oracle Insurance, Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications (EPTC), Ezulwini Municipality, MTN Eswatini, Sgonian Republik, Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) and the local media as well as South Africa's (SA) SuperSport TV.

Dlamini concluded by thanking His Majesty's Government for its continued support in hosting this national golfing event over the years since 2022 when the first edition was held.





▲Mbabane West MP and Minister of Tourism Jane Mkhonta presenting a E100 000 cheque to HRFA officials led by chairman Comfort Shongwe on Saturday at Sigwaca House.



▲Minister Mkhonta displaying the kit with players and officials.

# MP Jane Mkhonta pumps in E100k to Mbabane Regional football

By **Sibusiso Masilela**  
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**GIVING back to the community.**  
Mbabane West Member of Parliament Jane Mkhonta has pumped in E100,000 towards the development of regional football.

Mkhonta made the undertaking on Saturday through her foundation, the Jane Foundation, at Sigwaca House. The sponsorship will see Mbabane promotion and B division teams compete in an E65,000 knockout tournament.

Under-19 teams will compete in a mini league with E15,000 in prizes, while social teams will also battle for a separate E15,000 award. Additionally, E5,000 is specifically set aside for the women’s football tournament.

The Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs said she was happy to sponsor the competition under the auspices of the Hhohho Regional Football Association (HRFA).

“I am pleased to sponsor regional football and confident that the initiative will

promote the sport and keep the youth away from drugs,” she said.

HRFA Chairman Comfort Shongwe thanked the sponsor for the gesture.

“We are grateful to the Jane Foundation for the generous sponsorship. It will go a long way in football development. We are sure the clubs are grateful since we didn’t have a sponsor for the knockout. This sponsorship will be able to fulfil the technical demands of a player to hone their skills. The Jane Foundation, with this gesture, has touched many hearts of Mbabane people,” he said.

The Chairman further urged parents and sponsors to support the initiative.

“We are inviting parents to come in numbers to support their children as they showcase their talent. Football is no longer just a by-the-way thing, but a sport that can change people’s lives from poverty to riches. With the scarcity of jobs, sports remain an essential opportunity. We also invite corporates to assist us in HRFA in nurturing this talent since we need to train coaches, administrators, medics, and referees,” he said.

The event was graced by Eswatini Women Football Association (EWFA) executive member Aaron ‘Katalala’ Mavimbela, among others.



▲Women Football Association executive member Aaron Mavimbela with HRFA Secretary Nkosingiphile Shongwe.

## ‘Bull’s Muhle Siyaya at ‘Weslians’

By **Chris Dlamini**

“MANZINI Wanderers is a great team.”

These words came from Manzini Central High School Principal Celucolo ‘Dino’ Dlamini as he encouraged his pupil and school team defender Muhle Siyaya.

The latter is a Mbabane Highlanders defender who played regularly last season, while also helping his school to another Instacash Schools Soccer Tournament final this year.

Siyaya has been put on transfer by the rebuilding Inkunz’emnyama, as Highlanders

is affectionately known by its hordes of supporters.

He was one of over seven players released from the team’s preseason camp in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa (SA).

Reacting to the news, especially after Siyaya returned and joined hub giants Manzini Wanderers at training, Dlamini was full of motivation for the player.

It is no secret that Dlamini is a die-hard Highlanders supporter and former official of the most successful team in the Kingdom.

“Muhle Siyaya, you are one of the best players in the country. Highlanders showed that ngekutsi bafune kukulonisha boy (By wanting to loan you out). I respect and

love the team, Mbabane Highlanders, for prioritising your education as the team will be going in and out of the country to prepare itself in South Africa.

“Manzini Wanderers is a great team, boy. The fact that they had challenges last season doesn’t mean they are a small team. Good luck, boy. Well done Maweseli!” wrote the former Highlanders Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and posted on his Facebook account timeline.

There was no immediate comment from Wanderers, but it can be confirmed that Highlanders will be loaning him out instead of permanently parting ways with the youngster.



▲Muhle Siyaya.



# Police stop 'Birds' supporters meeting

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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ALL is not well in the Mbabane Swallows camp.

This comes after police stopped the supporters' meeting at the Princess Pholile Hall on Sunday. The order was enforced by a command by the board of Governor Welile Mabuza, on behalf of the board of trustees, ending the gathering of over 30 supporters.

Mabuza confirmed the latest news when reached for comment.

"We decided to stop the meeting after the National Supporters Committee disowned it, saying the meeting was not authorised by them. We had no choice but to write a letter to the Police on behalf of the team board of Trustees," he said.

Police Chief Information and Communications Superintendent Phindile Vilakati could not be reached for comment when compiling this report.

Swallows recently reunited with former coach Caleb Ngwenya following the uncertainty of Mozambique mentor Dario Monterio.

The red and white glamour side has further partnered with Mozambique Investors Donaldo Birage Enterprise. Swallows will also feature in the Friendship Cup, set to take place in September in Angola.

The international preseason cup will feature eight teams: Wiliete SC from Benguela de Agosto, Luanda City FC, Sagrada Esperança, Interclube, and Académica do Lobito between September 8 -14, 2025, at



▲ Dejected Mbabane Swallows fans.

the São Filipe and Buraco Stadiums in the cities of Benguela and Lobito.

The tournament will kick off a day after the

conclusion of the 2025 8Bet Trade Fair set to take place between August 30-September 7, 2025, at Mavuso Sports Centre.



▲ Best local golfer James Pennington receiving his prize from minister of Education Owen Nxumalo and FNB Eswatini CEO Thokozani Dlamini.

## FNB Eswatini Challenge:

# Pennington strikes over E65 000

By Chris Dlamini

FNB Eswatini does not just invest in sport, but people and progress.

This, as per the words of the bank's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thokozani "TK" Dlamini, was immediately proven true for the second time in the FNB Eswatini Golf Challenge 2025 edition, the fourth since 2022.

Just when local professional golfer James Pennington and the media expected his prize would be E30 000 for being the best LiSwati player, having finished in an incredible position 37 and made the cut for the E2 million prize package as well, FNB Eswatini announced an extra E30 000 for him breaking barriers to qualify into the top 50, playing on the final day of the tournament at the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club on Saturday, August 9. "The guaranteed prize money for James Pennington from FNB Eswatini is E60,000," confirmed the bank through one of its media team members, Sibongiseni Zondi. Pennington, indeed, was presented the top LiSwati prize of E30,000 at the awards ceremony. The extra E30,000 was announced and confirmed by both FNB Eswatini CEO and Education and Training Minister Owen Nxumalo, who stood in for Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Minister Bongani Nzima at the awards ceremony.

This left Pennington with E60,000, while it was further confirmed that he was still going to cash in his position 37 prize, a share of the E2 million prize package shared by the top 50.

## Earnings

Pennington tied with two other golfers at number 37, with the prize standing at E16,000. "He will still get that prize money, but be aware that he tied with two others," said Zondi when specifically asked about his share of the E2 million prize.

By the look of things, he will earn a further E5 333, taking his earnings to E65 333. He was the only local to make the cut for the final day round of the tournament, which was won by South Africa's (SA) three-time Sunshine Tour champion, Michael Hollick, 38 years old. The latter pocketed E317 000.

"There's a lot to learn from these guys, as they have toured the world. Otherwise, I didn't have the day I had hoped for in the final round, as I had aimed to improve my score. Unfortunately, I couldn't manage that," said Pennington. He welcomed the result and said he took a couple of positives from his performance and knew he had to work on a few things to elevate his game. The King's Cup Golf 2025 is next for him in September.

# Qhogi, Edwin welcome CAF draw

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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LOCAL CAF envoys Nsingizini Hotspurs and Royal Leopards have both welcomed their CAF draw in the Champions League and Confederation Cup.

This follows the CAF interclub competitions draw conducted on Saturday in Tanzania. Nsingizini will take on Zimbabwean side Simba Bhora FC in the Champions League, while Leopard will meet Namibia's Young Africans in the Confederation Cup.

The preliminary rounds will take place between September 21-29, 2025.

Qhogi said the draw was fair for them ahead of their maiden appearance in the premier club competition.

"It is a fair draw against opponents that we are unfamiliar with. They are still in the later stage of their league, also being the current leaders of the Zimbabwe Premier League. It's going to be good and tough opposition for us, but we will do our homework on them and plan accordingly for the match," he said.

Matsebula said they were going to prepare for the opposition.

"We need to prepare for the opposition, who are a closed book for us, and will do proper research about them. I am confident that the boys will come to the party for both



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs head coach Mandla Thlogi with Mamelodi Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso.

matches," he said. The Derrick Shiba-owned side featured in the 2024 CAF Confederation Cup against Stellenbosch FC under the tutelage of Zimbabwean coach Alexio Sergion. The Shiselweni-based side has bolstered its squad with four international players in Jimoh Adeleka (Nigeria), Joel Madonda (Uganda), Njabulo Macina (South Africa) and Kingsley Kwakyi (Ghana).

Meanwhile, Leopards have reportedly



▲ Royal Leopard head coach Edwin Matsebula.

concluded the signing of former Mbabane Swallows and Polokwane City striker Mohammed Anas.

The Ingwenyama Cup champions last reached the group stages of the same competition in 2022 under the guidance of Matsebula.

The two teams will earn E1.7 million participation fees from CAF, and they are both technically sponsored by Primo.





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**Police stop  
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**... Malkerns Police officers stop Mbabane Swallows meeting at Princess Pholile Hall on Sunday following an order by the club’s Board of Governors. *Page 23***