

King invites  
investors for E40bln  
water programmes

By King's Office Correspondents

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30-year plan to  
strengthen agriculture  
and economy revealed

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FNB Eswatini and  
partners pledge over  
E700k for Trade Fair

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# King invites investors for E40bln water programmes

By King's Office Correspondents

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA — His Majesty King Mswati III has invited multilateral financial institutions, development partners and private investors to fund multi-billion Emalangeni water projects in Eswatini.

He highlighted two prioritised bankable projects: the Nondvo Multipurpose Dam and the raising of the Hawane Dam, costing approximately US\$115 million (E2.1 billion). His Majesty made this call at the African Union-AIP Africa Water Investment Summit, pledging Eswatini's full support and describing water as the lifeblood of the continent and the world. He noted that an additional US\$2 billion (E38 billion) is needed for the National Potable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Master Plan. "With support from the African Union,

Global Water Partnership Southern Africa and Green Climate Fund, we are developing the Eswatini Water Investment Programme, set for completion by late 2025. This will guide resource mobilisation and implementation of high-impact water projects," the King said. He emphasised water's role in Eswatini's development, stating: "It fuels agriculture, which accounts for over 90 per cent of water abstractions, drives industry, safeguards public health and strengthens climate resilience. However, ageing infrastructure, rising water needs and climate change pose challenges." His Majesty endorsed the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP), a transformative platform to mobilise US\$30 billion (E570 billion) annually to close Africa's water investment gap. He added: "The AIP aligns with our national development plan, climate adaptation priorities and commitment to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6, ensuring clean water and sanitation for all



▲His Majesty King Mswati III and President Cyril Ramaphosa shake hands at the AU-AIP Africa Water Investment Summit in Cape Town. by 2030. It also advances Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want." The King highlighted Eswatini's efforts, including dams for irrigation and clean water supply, and ongoing engagements with financial institutions to support agriculture and water projects. He stressed the need for support from development partners, financial institutions, private investors and multilateral organisations due to the substantial funding required.

## 'Water security transcends borders'

By King's Office Correspondents

CAPE TOWN — His Majesty King Mswati III has stated that regional cooperation, integrated planning and bold investments are vital for water security among member states.

He noted that Eswatini shares major rivers with neighbouring countries and has cooperated on water projects that benefit agriculture and provide clean water. "Eswatini, a middle-user of several river basins, relies on coordination with South Africa and Mozambique for shared water infrastructure management and development, yielding positive results," the King said. He highlighted Africa's shared water

courses, crucial for industrialisation, energy, agriculture, health and development. "This summit showcases bankable, climate-resilient projects, fosters regional co-operation on transboundary water resources and attracts global finance to transform water systems," he said. His Majesty noted Africa's funding shortages for climate activities and limited access to technologies, yet the need to close the water security and sanitation investment gap remains. He welcomed the summit's outcome document, which would be presented at the G20 for consideration of financial support. "Let us reaffirm that Africa's water is its future. By investing in water security, we advance health, dignity and prosperity for a resilient Africa," the King concluded.



▲His Majesty King Mswati III with other Heads of State at the AU-AIP Summit in Cape Town, held under South Africa's G20 Presidency.

By King's Office Correspondents

CAPE TOWN — His Majesty King Mswati III was given the honour of presenting awards to heads of state for their transformative contributions to water security at the AU-AIP Summit in Cape Town, held under South Africa's G20 Presidency. Alongside Botswana President Duma Boko, the King presented those who have made strides in addressing Africa's water crisis, where 400 million people lack clean water. The awards were presented as follows:

- President Cyril Ramaphosa received the 2025 Presidential Global Water Change-maker Award for launching the G20's Global Outlook Council on Water Investments and hosting the summit.
- Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud of Saudi Arabia was honoured for initiating

## HMK presents awards to water security leaders

the Global Water Organisation to drive cooperation on water security, sustainable development, peace and innovation.

- His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho was awarded for championing the Highlands Water Project, a model of transboundary cooperation.
- Presidents Bassirou Diomaye Faye of Senegal and HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE were recognised for co-hosting the UN 2026 Water Conference, prioritising investment, solidarity and water in the global climate agenda through COP 28.
- President Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania was honoured for developing the Tanzania Water Investment Programme and advancing leadership in water and climate through reforms, financing partnerships and inclusive governance.

Not all leaders were present, with representatives accepting on their behalf.



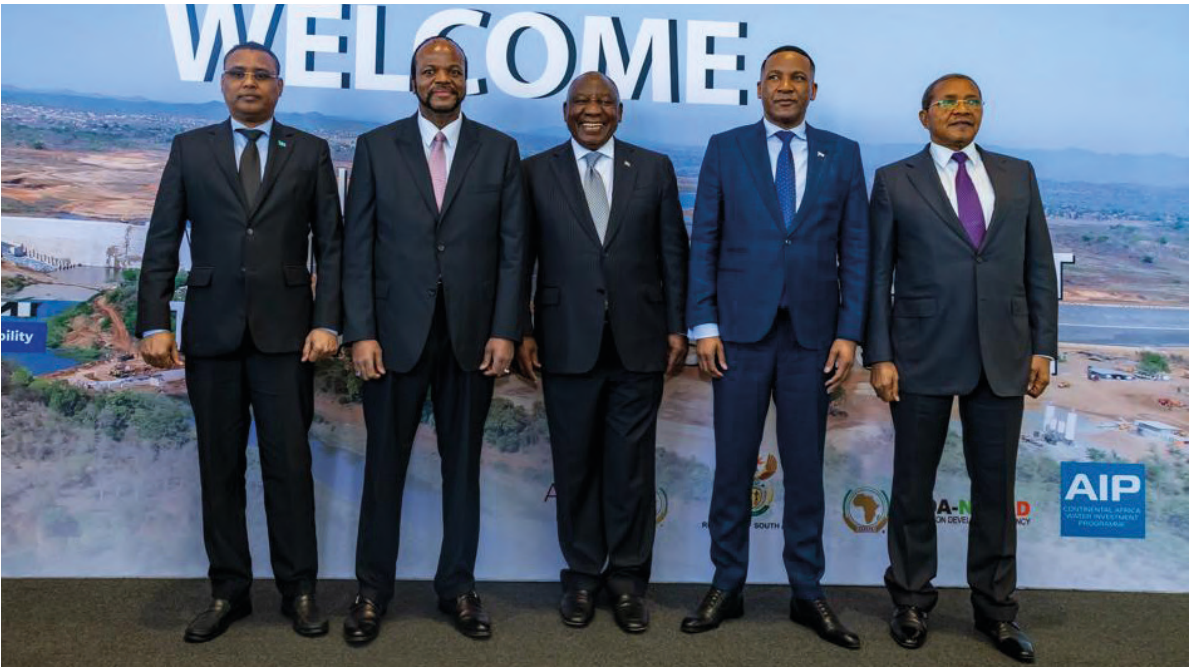
▲His Majesty King Mswati III and President of Botswana Duma Boko present an award to a representative of Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.



AU - AIP SUMMIT IN CAPE TOWN. . .



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III shares a light moment with South African President Ramaphosa and former President of Tanzania Jakaya Kikwete. (Courtesy pics)



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III with South Sudan Prime Minister Salva Kiir Moyardit, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Botswana President Duma Biko, former President of Tanzania Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete pose for a group photo.

Stories by King's Office  
Correspondent

CAPE TOWN – South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has launched the Global Outlook Council on Water Investments, a G20 Presidential Legacy Initiative to transform water into a driver of economic growth, innovation and peace.

The launch occurred at the African Union-AIP Summit at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, marking a historic moment for global water security.

The Council, part of South Africa's G20 Presidency themed "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability," will track progress, unlock finance, report annually and align efforts across the G20, UN, multilateral banks and

# Ramaphosa launches global council to tackle water crisis

the private sector. It aims to mobilise capital to close Africa's US\$30 billion annual water investment gap by 2030.

Ramaphosa outlined four summit goals:

- ▶ Endorse a declaration to scale up investments and improve governance.
- ▶ Showcase 80 priority water projects from 38 countries.
- ▶ Facilitate government-financier partnerships.
- ▶ Elevate water on global agendas, from

the G20 to the UN 2026 Water Conference.

"Water must be financed, tracked and championed, not an afterthought in climate and finance discussions," he said.

The Council's leadership includes co-chairs President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE, Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados and Bill Gates, with alternate co-chairs former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete and UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed.

Members include global leaders like Presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico and

João Lourenço of Angola.

Ramaphosa cited South Africa's Zuikerbosch Water Purification Plant's second phase, supplying 600 million litres daily, as evidence of Africa's capacity for large-scale projects.

He urged delegates to forge partnerships, emphasising water as a human right, particularly for women bearing the burden of scarcity.

The summit, running until 15 August, will feature matchmaking sessions to secure investments and a declaration to influence global water agendas.

## ... AU targets US\$30 billion for 25 countries' water projects

CAPE TOWN – The African Union is intensifying efforts to secure US\$30 billion annually for water and sanitation projects in 25 African countries, announced former Tanzanian President

Jakaya Kikwete, Alternate Co-Chair of the AIP High-Level Panel on Water in Africa, at the AU-AIP Summit in Cape Town.

Hosted under South Africa's G20

Presidency, the summit aims to close the continent's water investment gap by 2030.

Eswatini is not yet among these countries, but a funding proposal has been submitted for approval.

## Every drop counts in Botswana

CAPE TOWN – Botswana President Duma Boko has called for bold, innovative solutions to address escalating water challenges.

Speaking at the AU-AIP Summit at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, hosted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Boko invited global investors, entrepreneurs and institutions to partner with Botswana in transforming its water and sanitation sector.

### Droughts

He highlighted Botswana's acute water scarcity as a semi-arid nation, worsened by climate-driven droughts, unpredictable rainfall and depleted groundwater.

"Every drop counts in Botswana," he said, noting that sparse population distribution creates engineering and financial hurdles for water infrastructure.

Botswana, among four southern African nations projected to face high water stress by 2040, prioritises sustainable water management to meet Sustainable Development Goal 6 by 2030.

Boko declared: "Water is a basic right, essential for life, economic growth and stability. Without water, there is no light to switch."

He urged collective action to provide the water Africa needs to thrive.

## Ex-UN Secretary General calls for scaled-up water initiatives

CAPE TOWN – Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called for increased investments in water initiatives, particularly in vulnerable regions like Africa and Latin America.

Speaking at the AU-AIP Summit, he underscored water management's role in achieving the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

"Collective action on water bolsters climate change adaptation and mitigation," he said, urging global cooperation.

He praised the African Investment Programme as a model for impactful change in environmentally challenged regions.



▲ Heads of State, ministers and financiers following proceedings at the AU - AIP Summit in Cape Town.

## Investors to fund transformative projects

CAPE TOWN – Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister Abdisalan Abdi Ali has urged global investors to support transformative water projects to address Somalia's acute water crisis and challenges across Africa.

"We are here to present solutions ready for partnership and funding," he said at the AU-AIP Summit, addressing heads of state,

ministers and financiers.

He emphasised water's role in survival, stability and peace, noting Somalia's challenges with droughts, floods and limited water storage.

The country has developed a pipeline of water projects worth over US\$50 million, aligned with the AU-AIP and Africa's Agenda 2063.

“

Collective action on water bolsters climate change adaptation and mitigation

”



Stories By Delisa Magagula

PRIME Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini has declared the agriculture sector central to Eswatini's social and economic development, officially opening this year's Agriculture Investment Forum.

Speaking at the event, Dlamini said agriculture remains a source of livelihood for most emaSwati and plays a critical role in eradicating poverty and malnutrition. He noted that global concerns over food and water security underscore the need for long-term agricultural planning.

The Prime Minister recalled the success of the inaugural event held in Manzini last year and commended the Minister and the Ministry of Agriculture for their dedication to making the forum an annual platform for growth.

He said the event allows the country to reflect on previous outcomes, update stakeholders on progress, and improve future strategies.

Dlamini highlighted Eswatini's investment climate, citing peace, stability, continuity, and predictability under the traditional system of governance and the leadership of His Majesty King Mswati III.

He said the country has investor-friendly laws and institutions that enforce them. The Prime Minister pointed to the 'Residence by Investment Bill' as an example of government efforts to attract serious investors.

"The bill will grant permanent residence to individuals meeting a set investment threshold. The government is finalising a

# 30-year plan to strengthen Agriculture, economy unveiled



▲ The Prime Minister during the opening of the forum.

30-year economic, social, and institutional transformation plan, known as the Grand Plan for National Transformation, which emerged from national consultations at Sibaya," he said.

"The plan, now in stakeholder validation, aims for double-digit economic growth and will open further investment opportunities," said the PM in addition.

Dlamini also reaffirmed Eswatini's alignment with regional and global agricultural development frameworks, urging private and public sector partnerships to drive the sector forward.

Dlamini said the Kingdom is committed to the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Kampala Declaration, adopted in Uganda in 2024, which calls for transforming

agri-food systems to end hunger and malnutrition by 2030.

He added that His Majesty King Mswati III has declared 2025 the 'Year of Transformation' under the 'Nkwe' mandate, a call to end hunger and poverty in the shortest possible time.

The Prime Minister noted that the Eswatini National Agricultural Investment Plan (ENAIIP) incorporates the African Union's Agenda 2063, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2, and the Food and Agriculture Organisation's 'four betters'. He said the government's plans aim to achieve food sovereignty and economic prosperity. Dlamini reiterated that the government will act as an enabler of business and investment but stressed that the private sector's role is paramount in

economic transformation.

He said public-private partnerships and contract farming models could stimulate production and attract investment.

The Prime Minister reported that some pledges made at last year's forum had already been realised, including the Youth Employment Opportunities and Empowerment Project. He said investing in youth secures the country's future.

Dlamini also warned that climate change poses a major challenge to agriculture, calling for investment in adaptation, mitigation, and resilience-building measures.

He listed potential investment streams including agricultural inputs, high-value crop production, agro-processing, infrastructure, research and development, agrotechnology, logistics, cold chain management, and skills development. He urged stakeholders to continue engaging the Ministry of Agriculture beyond the forum, noting that pledges need not be limited to finance but can also include technical assistance and material support.

The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the Food and Agriculture Organisation for its ongoing support, and acknowledged the contributions of all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Agriculture's organising team. He concluded by declaring the Investment Forum officially open, expressing confidence that its outcomes will have lasting impacts on agriculture and the economy.

## Eswatini's bold steps against plastic pollution

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

DURING his address in Geneva, Switzerland, Ambassador Vuyile Dlamini represented the Kingdom of Eswatini at a pivotal conference focused on the global challenge of plastic pollution.

This marked a historic moment for Eswatini, as it was the first time the nation took the floor to discuss such a pressing environmental issue. In her statement, Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs Jane Mkhonta-Simelane underscored the urgent need for collective action against plastic pollution, which she described as "one of the most visible and harmful forms of environmental degradation facing our world today."

Mkhonta highlighted Eswatini's unwavering commitment to combating plastic pollution, showcasing the nation's proactive measures.

"In 2021, we enacted the Control of Plastic Bags Regulations, which introduced a phased ban on plastic carrier bags below 50 microns," she noted. This legislation reflects the government's dedication to protecting both the environment and public health while promoting the adoption of sustainable alternatives.

The minister also pointed to the success of various awareness initiatives, including nationwide clean-up campaigns and educational programs in schools. "We are currently developing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Framework to improve plastic waste management," Mkhon-

ta explained, emphasising the importance of holding producers accountable for their products throughout their lifecycle.

A crucial aspect of Mkhonta's speech was the acknowledgement of the gendered implications of plastic pollution. She pointed out that a significant portion of the informal waste sector, particularly in plastic recycling, consists of impoverished women who provide essential environmental services. "These women are often exposed to unsafe working conditions, lack social protection, and receive minimal wages," she stated, highlighting the urgent need for equitable solutions. Mkhonta asserted that addressing plastic pollution requires recognising this gender imperative. "The transition to a circular, sustainable plastics economy must be fast, fair, and just," she urged, calling for measures that ensure women have access to decent working conditions, fair remuneration, and inclusion in decision-making processes.

Despite the progress made, Mkhonta candidly acknowledged the challenges Eswatini faces in its fight against plastic pollution. "We face key challenges, including limited enforcement capacity for plastic regulations and insufficient recycling infrastructure," she noted. Other obstacles include the high cost of alternative materials, particularly for small and informal businesses, and social resistance to change due to a lack of awareness.



▲ Outgoing MTN Eswatini CEO Wandile Mtshali.



▲ Acting MTN Eswatini CEO Jerry Soko.

## Wandile Mtshali sacked as MTN Eswatini CEO

THE Board of Directors of MTN Eswatini has announced that Chief Executive Officer Wandile Mtshali will be leaving the company after his five-year contract to pursue other professional interests.

The announcement was made on Wednesday with a press statement. The statement added that Jerry Soko will serve as interim CEO from November 1, 2025, while the process to appoint a substantive CEO is underway.

News of Mtshali's dismissal started circulating last week, where it was said that Mtshali's departure followed a Board decision finalised this past week. Sources familiar with the matter alleged that MTN Group leadership had harboured concerns over his leadership style, with dissatisfaction

reportedly building for some time.

Insiders said MTN Eswatini has faced operational and strategic challenges, including increased competition from competitors.

One source claimed the brand had been 'too quiet' with minimal marketing communication, a factor that contributed to declining revenues.

Another source said shareholder returns had dropped compared to previous years, raising concerns over the business's future direction. Attempts to reach Mtshali for comment were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, members of the public have expressed mixed reactions following the announcement that MTN Eswatini Chief Executive Officer Wandile Mtshali will be leaving the company at the end of his contract.



# King Charles III honours 10 UEDF members

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

HIS Majesty King Charles III has honoured 10 members of the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) for participating in a procession and parade during His and Her Majesty Queen Camilla’s coronation ceremony. King Charles awarded the soldiers with coronation medals for representing the country with honour and distinction during the coronation through the British High Commissioner to the Kingdom of Eswatini, His Excellency Colin Wells.

The awarding ceremony of the coronation medals to the soldiers, took place on Wednesday morning at UEDF Headquarters at Nokwane.

This comes after the soldiers took part along with representatives of the armed forces of 35 other Commonwealth nations in the procession and parade during the coronation, which took place on May 8, 2023 at Westminster Abbey, London, England.

When making his remarks, Wells mentioned that the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla took place, exactly eight

months after His Majesty King Charles ascended to the throne of the United Kingdom and the thrones of 14 other Commonwealth Realms.

“It was the first such event to take place in the United Kingdom for 70 years. It was not a British event, it was a world event, but most especially, it was deliberately a Commonwealth event, in recognition of His Majesty’s passion for the Commonwealth of Nations. My country was truly honoured by the presence in Westminster Abbey on that day of His Majesty King Mswati III, taking His place amongst the world’s monarchs at the centre of the Abbey. It is at times like that that we recall how close the shared histories of Eswatini and the United Kingdom are,” he said.

He mentioned that the two countries were the closest of friends, marked so obviously by the relations between the two monarchs, King Mswati III and Charles III.

“Let us not forget that King Charles, as the Prince of Wales, visited Eswatini in 1987 and 1997. When I had the honour of an audience with Him (King Charles) in February this year, He spoke so fondly to me of those visits and of His gracious host, King Mswati. Long may the close ties between our two countries continue,” he said.

Wells pointed out that the people of the

United Kingdom were deeply grateful to King Mswati III and to the Commander of the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force, General Moses Mashikilisana Fakudze, for sending the 10 fine soldiers to take part, along with representatives of the armed forces of 35 other Commonwealth nations, in the procession and parade during the coronation.

He mentioned that what they did was an extraordinary and spectacularly professional display of soldiering. When addressing the 10 soldiers directly, Wells pointed out that they represented their King and country with honour and distinction.

“You should all be very proud of your service for which you are being honoured at this investiture today (yesterday). King Charles III, King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and of his other realms and territories, has graciously approved that each of you should be awarded the medal of the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla. May I be the first to congratulate you. I am delighted by the honour of presenting these medals to you today,” he said.

The UEDF Army Commander expressed his heartfelt appreciation and thanks to the Commander-in-Chief of the UEDF, His Majesty King Mswati III, on behalf of

the UEDF, for sanctioning the contingent that participated in the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla.

He pointed out that it was with deep honour and pride to welcome the British High Commissioner to the awarding ceremony, while stating that his presence was symbolic and a reaffirmation of the bond that exists between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Eswatini.

“It will be remiss of me if I do not acknowledge and thank the warm hospitality that was extended to the members of the UEDF who participated during the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla. The generosity, respect and camaraderie shown to our soldiers will be remembered for years to come,” he said.

He stated that the medals that were bestowed upon the soldiers yesterday were more than decorations, but they were symbols of shared history, mutual respect and partnerships forged in service, ceremony, and sacrifice.

“We hope this ceremony will strengthen the relationship existing between the UEDF and the British Army as well as the two nations,” he said.



▲ UEDF Commander Mashikilisane Fakudze explaining a point to British High Commissioner to Eswatini Colins Wells during the ceremony.



▲ Wells shaking hands with one of the soldiers who were honoured during the ceremony.

## 21-yr-old wins brand-new Suzuki from eBet

... We are not a gambling, but a gaming company-eBet CEO

NGWANE Park’s very own Thubelihle Sibandze, 21, is celebrating in style after winning a brand-new Suzuki Celerio worth over E200,000, courtesy of the eBet Registration Drive and its community give-back initiative.

It should be noted that Thubelihle is the second winner, as not so long ago, Lindokuhle Maseko drove home with a brand-new Toyota Vitz.

The ecstatic winner from KaShali could hardly believe her luck when her name was announced, joining the growing list of ordinary Swazis whose lives have been changed through such promotional campaigns. “This is more than just a car, it’s a life-changing blessing,” Thubelihle beamed as he received the keys to her shiny new ride.

Ebet Chief Executive Officer, Sibonginkhosi Lukhele said the initiative

was not only about attracting registrations, but also about giving back to the community through tangible rewards.

“We are not a gambling company but a gaming company, and we are excited to plough back into the community,” Lukhele pointed out as he handed over the car keys to the winner.

But Thubelihle wasn’t the only one to walk away with a smile. The event saw several other lucky participants scoop fantastic prizes. Sithembile Simelane took home a sleek Samsung Television Set, while Ramadi Issa landed himself a Samsung mobile phone. Additional prizes included air fryers, smartphones, and a Smart TV, creating an atmosphere of excitement and celebration. The CEO expressed gratitude to all participants, promising more initiatives in the future that will reward loyal customers and continue uplifting communities.



▲ The winner Thubelihle Sibandze receiving his car keys from eBet CEO Sibonginkhosi Lukhele.





▲ The alleged ATM bombers Sicelo Msibi, Given Mavuso, Mzwandile Lukhele and Lindani Zitha mafe their appearance in court today.

# Cops lead with video evidence in ATM bombers court case

Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE Mbabane Magistrate’s Court heard testimony in the ongoing investigation into a series of ATM bombings around the city last August. Four men accused are Sicelo Msibi, Given Mavuso, Mzwandile Lukhele, all the way from Tjakastard, South Africa, and former Eswatini Television Authority employee Lindani Zitha. Inspector Akhona Dlodlu, the lead investigator, told the court that during the arrests, the police confiscated red sashes from the waists of Msibi, Mavuso, and Lukhele. He said these sashes were linked to substances seen in the video footage from the locations of the bombings. Zitha, he added, was not wearing a sash at the time

of his arrest. “The sashes were attached to certain substances and were part of how we identified the suspects in the footage,” Dlodlu said. During the demonstration in court, a strong odour emanated from the confiscated sashes, highlighting the conditions in which the exhibits were kept. **Postponement** The accused requested a postponement, stating they were not prepared to cross-examine Dlodlu because the Crown had not previously notified them that he would testify. Zitha added that he had not informed his lawyer, believing that the chief investigator’s testimony would follow after the custodians from FNB presented their evidence. The court allowed Dlodlu’s testimony to proceed but postponed cross-examination to a later date. Proceedings were conducted under heightened security, with officers from His Majesty’s Correctional Services and plain-clothes

police positioned strategically outside the courtroom. Video evidence showed Msibi swinging a pickaxe at an ATM and rigging it with a foreign object linked to a car battery, assisted by Mavuso. Dlodlu said Msibi was identifiable in the footage by his red sash, tracksuit, sweater, and boxer shorts, while Mavuso wore an ANC jacket. **Reviewing** Senior Magistrate Sifiso Vilakati noted the sophistication of the alleged criminal activity and emphasised the importance of carefully reviewing evidence. They said the case was significant due to its implications for public safety and the financial sector. The proceedings are ongoing, with further cross-examinations and evidence presentation scheduled in upcoming sessions. Authorities stated that the investigation continues to ensure accountability and maintain public confidence in law enforcement.

## E6 000 bail for kidnapping, assault

A 34-year-old man from Sibetsamoya, Siggino Kunene, appeared in the Mbabane Magistrate’s Court facing charges of assault and kidnapping after allegedly holding his girlfriend hostage for four days. Prosecutors told the court that Kunene assaulted the victim with a knobkerrie, fists, and kicks, causing multiple bruises. He allegedly detained her to allow her wounds to heal under his supervision. In his testimony, Kunene denied strangling the victim but admitted to detaining her. The court granted him bail of E6 000. Magistrates noted the severity of the allegations, highlighting the physical and psychological harm caused by the alleged actions. A prosecutor stated that the accused used various forms of physical violence over a period of four days, preventing the victim from leaving, which constitutes a serious breach of the law. Observers noted the case highlights ongoing concerns regarding domestic violence in Eswatini. Authorities emphasised the need for both legal recourse and victim protection, as well as support services to address trauma resulting from prolonged abuse.

### Bail

Senior Magistrate Sifiso Vilakati urged the monitoring of the case to ensure the victim receives adequate protection and that Kunene adheres to bail conditions. They said that while the accused is entitled to a fair hearing, the safety and well-being of the victim remain paramount. The case is ongoing, with further hearings scheduled to allow for full cross-examination and presentation of additional evidence. Authorities reaffirmed their commitment to pursuing justice while protecting victims’ rights.

## Man gets 10 years for pelting his father with stones

A 25-year-old man has been sentenced to 10 years in prison with an option of a fine of E10 000 for pelting his father with stones and further insulting him. Mgisana Lukhele (25) of Lamgabhi area appeared on Tuesday before Principal Magistrate Florence Msibi, charged with two counts of contravening the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act; namely pelting his father, Delisa Lukhele, with stones several times as well as insulting him. He committed both offences on August 9, 2025, at the Lamgabhi area. He pleaded guilty to both offences. According to Lukhele, the reason why he committed the offences was that he was too excited and intoxicated at the same time. He pointed out that there was an event which took place at a nearby homestead, where a certain man was paying dowry for his lover. He mentioned that during the event, he won a traditional competition, where he outpaced some members of the

community while carrying a special meat otherwise known as umgwabulo. He stated that after winning the competition, he became too excited, yet at the time, he had taken one too many and as a result, he began to sing some songs while shouting. Lukhele mentioned that upon arrival at home, his father reasoned with him to stop making noise and in retaliation, he pelted him with stones and further insulted him. He blamed the alcohol he had imbibed on the day, stating that if it had not been for the liquor, he would not have committed the offences. He was found guilty as per his own plea. He mitigated for a lenient sentence on the grounds that he had an 11-month-old baby, who was dependent on him and that his prolonged detention might result in him losing his job. He stated that he tried to convince his parents to have them discuss the matter at the family level, but his efforts proved to be futile.

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# BUSINESS NEWS

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### SADC Ministers endorse strategies to boost regional integration

THE Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers convened in Antananarivo, Madagascar, to deliberate on measures aimed at strengthening regional integration, boosting intra-SADC trade, and advancing self-reliance across the 16-member bloc. Representing the Kingdom of Eswatini was Minister for Economic Planning and Development Dr. Thambo Gina, accompanied by Principal Secretary Thabsile Mlangeni, Eswatini SADC Unit Director Thobile Dlamini, and senior government officials.

### SA business confidence edges up in July ahead of Trump's 30% tariff

JOHANNESBURG — South African business confidence rose in July, helped by higher new vehicle sales, rising manufacturing output, strong precious metals prices and well-contained inflation, data showed on Wednesday. The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Business Confidence Index rose to 116.7 in July, up from 113.2 in June.

### Rand extends gains after business confidence, retail sales data

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand extended its gains on Wednesday, boosted by a weaker dollar after the release of a domestic business confidence index and retail sales figures. At 1310 GMT, the rand traded at 17.54 against the dollar, about 0.4 per cent firmer than its previous close, after strengthening more than 1 per cent on Tuesday.

# FNB Eswatini and partners pledge over E700k for Trade Fair



▲ The KIA Sonnet for this year's 'Win-a-Car' competition.

By Delisa Magagula

THE 2025 Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) will see a significant boost in funding and activities, following a joint sponsorship announcement by FNB Eswatini, WesBank, and Eswatini Auto Fin.

Together, the partners have committed over E778,865 towards flagship competitions, business seminars, and entrepreneur showcases aimed at stimulating local economic growth.

Speaking at the launch event on August in Ezulwini, FNB Eswatini CEO Thokozani Dlamini said the bank viewed itself as a responsible citizen and a reliable partner for the sustainable development of our people and country.

"We are committed to extending significant resources, now and into the future, towards helping emaSwati achieve their dreams. Sitintile Eswatini futsi asiyindzawa," said Dlamini.

### E430 000 pledged by FNB Eswatini

FNB Eswatini has confirmed a total sponsorship of E430,000 towards Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) 2025.

The package includes:

1. E230,000 through WesBank for the "Win-a-Car" competition.
2. E200,000 for the EITF Business Seminars under the FNB Business Chamber.

The bank will also host daily FNB Business Clinics during the Trade Fair, providing SMEs with personalised financial and business advice.

Services will cover balance sheets, business plans, cash flow projections, and lending score assessments.

Dlamini said these efforts were designed to connect SMEs with the real help they need to grow and scale their work to reach new markets in Eswatini and beyond.

### 'Win-a-Car' competition returns

One of the Trade Fair's main attractions, the 'Win-a-Car' competition, returns this year with a brand-new Kia Sonnet LX worth E378,865 as



▲ FNB Eswatini CEO Thokozani Dlamini.

the prize.

According to EIPA CEO Sibani Mngomezulu, WesBank has contributed E230,000 while Eswatini Auto Fin has added E148,865 towards the purchase of the vehicle.

"The 'Win-a-Car' competition is a powerful example of what is possible through partnership. We saw our visitor numbers jump from 40,000 in 2023 to over 56,000 in 2024, and our goal for 2025 is to increase this by over 30 per cent," said Mngomezulu.

The entry process has been fully digitalised this year to ensure seamless participation. The winner will be announced on September 6.

Worth mentioning is that E200,000 sponsorship will fund 10 business seminars at the EITF Business Chamber, focusing on the theme 'Digital Transformation 2.0, Creating Business Networks'.

Mngomezulu said the partnership had already delivered measurable results:

1. 2023: 9 seminars with over 1,600 participants.
2. 2024: 11 seminars with over 800 attendees.
3. 2025: Target to reach more SMEs while introducing new initiatives.

Events will include the Eswatini Annual Ex-

porters Awards and the launch of the 'Buy Eswatini App' an e-commerce platform aimed at strengthening local digital trade.

FNB will once again host the Entrepreneur of the Year Awards (EYA) Square at the Trade Fair, giving selected 2025 EYA regional winners exclusive exhibition space.

"We are committed to supporting our entrepreneurs beyond the award stage, providing them with exposure, networks, and opportunities that set them up for sustainable success," said the CEO.

He further mentioned that, this year's EYA Square will feature products and services from SMEs recognised as among the best in the Kingdom.

Throughout the Trade Fair, FNB Eswatini teams will be present to assist attendees with financial advice, SME support, and general banking services.

The bank's partnership with the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) and His Majesty's Government forms part of what Dlamini described as a united front to grow the economy and drive sustainable development.

The EITF has grown steadily in attendance and commercial participation over the past two years.

EIPA's figures show a 40 per cent increase in visitor numbers between 2023 and 2024, driven largely by major attractions like the "Win-a-Car" competition.

With the 2025 goal to surpass last year's 56,000 attendees by more than 30 per cent, organisers anticipate higher trade volumes, stronger SME participation, and increased cross-border interest.

The 2025 Eswatini International Trade Fair will run from August 29 to September 7 at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre.

Mngomezulu encouraged public participation saying these institutions are not just sponsors they are partners in their national development. He urged all emaSwati and visitors to support them.

With close to E800,000 in combined sponsorships, expanded digital integration, and a focus on SME growth, the 2025 Eswatini International Trade Fair is positioned to be one of the most commercially impactful editions in recent years.



### FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.0978	17.5635
G.B. Pound	23.1845	23.8567
EURO	20.0677	20.6739
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	





Stories By Delisa Magagula

# SADC Ministers endorse strategies to boost regional integration

THE Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers convened in Antananarivo, Madagascar, to deliberate on measures aimed at strengthening regional integration, boosting intra-SADC trade, and advancing self-reliance across the 16-member bloc.

Representing the Kingdom of Eswatini was Minister for Economic Planning and Development Dr. Thambo Gina, accompanied by Principal Secretary Thabsile Mlangeni, Eswatini SADC Unit Director Thobile Dlamini, and senior government officials.

In his opening remarks, SADC Executive Secretary Elias Mpedi Magosi welcomed the delegations and expressed gratitude to Madagascar for its hospitality.

He underscored the importance of unity among member states, particularly in the face of global economic headwinds.

“We must remain united as we address the economic challenges brought about by rising tariffs and shifting geopolitical dynamics,” Magosi said.

Discussions placed strong emphasis on reducing dependency on raw commodity exports through industrialisation and value addition.

Ministers highlighted that regional self-reliance depended on stronger value chains and collaborative investment in manufacturing capacity.

Eswatini’s delegation actively contributed to the talks, voicing support for policies that advance competitiveness and expand cross-border trade.

Minister Gina noted the country’s com-

mitment to regional growth and industrialisation, stressing that targeted cooperation could accelerate development across the SADC region.

Meanwhile, the council endorsed two major policy frameworks:

SADC SMEs Competitiveness Strategy is designed to strengthen small and medium enterprises across member states.

SADC Investment Climate Scorecard, aimed at helping countries assess and improve their investment environments.

According to the Council, these tools are expected to improve the region’s ability to attract capital, stimulate entrepreneurship, and compete in global markets.

Energy security featured prominently in the meeting. Ministers noted progress on several interconnector projects linking Angola, Malawi, and Tanzania to the Southern African Power Pool.

These links are expected to improve electricity reliability and reduce power deficits in multiple countries. Magosi also confirmed that Madagascar had agreed to operationalise the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE), a move expected to coordinate renewable energy initiatives and support member states in transitioning to cleaner energy sources.

In the health sector, the Council discussed ways to improve access to affordable medicines and medical supplies. A Draft Charter for SADC Pooled Procurement Services was tabled, proposing a collective purchasing system for essential drugs and equipment.

Ministers noted that pooled procurement could lower costs, standardise quality, and strengthen supply chains for member states,

especially in the face of health emergencies.

The meeting reviewed funding for regional projects. The Council reported that US\$206 million had been mobilised from International Cooperating Partners during the last financial year.

However, US\$624.5 billion is still required to implement priority projects under the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).

Ministers stressed the need to broaden funding sources, including domestic resource mobilisation and public-private partnerships.

The Council paid tribute to leaders and officials who have passed away since the last gathering, acknowledging their contributions to regional integration.

Recognition was also given to the outgoing Council Chairperson, Professor Amon Murwira of Zimbabwe, for his service. Delegates pledged support to the incoming Chairperson, Dr. Rafaravavifika Rasata of Madagascar.

The Antananarivo meeting concluded with preparations for the 45th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, where leaders will map out the next phase of regional cooperation.

Magosi said the Council’s work would feed directly into the Summit’s agenda. “The goal remains a peaceful, industrialised, and self-reliant Southern Africa,” he said.

Minister Gina said Eswatini remained committed to the bloc’s shared objectives.

“Our participation reflects Eswatini’s dedication to collaboration, sustainable development, and regional progress,” he said.

According to the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Eswatini views

the SADC Council of Ministers as a strategic platform to influence policy, secure investment opportunities, and strengthen partnerships that support the Kingdom’s economic goals.

The Ministry confirmed that the delegation would present follow-up actions from the meeting to relevant stakeholders in Eswatini, ensuring alignment between national development plans and regional commitments.

The outcomes of the Council meeting are expected to have direct implications for trade, energy, health, and industrial policy within the SADC bloc, with Eswatini positioning itself to benefit from and contribute to the collective regional agenda.

Among the key outcomes was the adoption of the SADC SMEs Competitiveness Strategy and the SADC Investment Climate Scorecard, aimed at boosting competitiveness and attracting investment.

The Council also noted advances in regional energy security, including interconnector projects linking Angola, Malawi, and Tanzania to the Southern African Power Pool.

Madagascar will move ahead with operationalising the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

In the health sector, ministers reviewed a Draft Charter for the SADC Pooled Procurement Services to improve access to affordable medicines and medical supplies across the region.

On financing, Magosi reported that over US\$206 million had been mobilised from International Cooperating Partners over the past year but emphasised that an estimated US\$624.5 billion is still required to fully implement regional development plans.



▲ The Southern African Development Community Council of Ministers.



▲ Some of the deliberations.

## Previous winner’s business boosted by car

THE 2024 “Win-a-Car” competition winner, Olivert Mukabata, has described the prize as a turning point for his agricultural business.

Speaking ahead of this year’s Eswatini International Trade Fair, Mukabata said the vehicle, a Kia Sonet, had improved efficiency in his operations.

“The car has helped and impacted my business in a big way. It allows me to transport goods, make deliveries, and attend meetings efficiently. It has also given me the ability to respond quickly to customer needs,” he said.

Mukabata noted that the prize had also inspired others in the farming sector.

“It gave hope to farmers. Farming is not a side hustle; it can be a viable business. This

win proved that with the right support, agriculture can sustain livelihoods,” he said.

Reflecting on the competition, Mukabata expressed gratitude to the organisers and sponsors. “I am truly grateful for winning. The prize has not only supported my work but also encouraged others to take farming seriously,” he said.

This year’s competition prize is a Kia Sonnet LX valued at E378,865, funded by contributions from WesBank and Eswatini Auto Fin. The 2025 edition has moved to a fully digitalised entry system to make participation easier. FNB Eswatini CEO said past winners’ experiences showed the real economic impact of the initiative.

“We are inspired by the story of winners

like Sibongiseni Nxumalo in 2023 and Olivette Mukabata in 2024, who have used their prizes to grow their businesses,” he said.

### HMK to announce 2025 ‘Win-a-Car’ Champion

THE 2025 edition of the “Win-a-Car” competition will feature a significant change in the prize announcement ceremony.

EIPA CEO Sibani Mngomezulu confirmed that His Majesty King Mswati III will personally announce the winner during the Trade Fair. “This year, the winner will be announced by His Majesty on September 6. It will be a historic moment for the competition, marking the first time the King takes part in the announcement,” he said. In previous years, the winner was named by event organisers without the in-

volvement of the monarch. Mngomezulu said the King’s participation reflected the growing prominence of the competition and its value in promoting local enterprise. The competition’s 2025 prize is a Kia Sonnet LX, jointly funded by WesBank and Eswatini Auto Fin, and worth E378,865. WesBank contributed E230,000, and Eswatini Auto Fin added E148,865. Mngomezulu said the organisers had taken steps to modernise the process. “We have digitalised the entry process for the competition to make it more seamless for all participants,” he said.

The “Win-a-Car” competition is one of the Trade Fair’s major attractions and has been credited with boosting attendance figures.

Mngomezulu said the goal for 2025 was to surpass last year’s 56,000 visitors by more than 30%, driven by events such as the prize announcement and the expanded business seminar programme.



# SA business confidence edges up in July ahead of Trump’s 30% tariff



▲A worker at the beer storage tanks at Darling Brew, on the outskirts of Cape Town, South Africa.

JOHANNESBURG — South African business confidence rose in July, helped by higher new vehicle sales, rising manufacturing output, strong precious metals prices and well-contained inflation, data showed on Wednesday.

The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Business Confidence Index rose to 116.7 in July, up from 113.2 in June.

The business chamber releases the index every two months. June’s business confidence level was lower than May’s 115.8 reading before July’s rebound.

The chamber said the 30 per cent tariff on South African exports to the U.S. that kicked in last week could weigh on sentiment in the remainder of the year.

“The imposition of a general tariff of 30 per cent by the USA on exports from South Africa to the USA could have unintended and austere consequences for the South African economy and for longer-term business relations,” the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) said in a statement.

South African officials were planning to submit a revised trade deal offer to Washington on Tuesday to try to secure a lower tariff or exempt major industries.

Months of negotiations with U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration have so far failed to produce a deal. SACCI said it was important that South Africa does everything possible to have positive trade relations with the U.S. given subdued economic growth forecasts for this year and next. (Reuters)

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand extended its gains on Wednesday, boosted by a weaker dollar after the release of a domestic business confidence index and retail sales figures.

At 1310 GMT, the rand traded at 17.54 against the dollar, about 0.4 per cent firmer than its previous close, after strengthening more than 1 per cent on Tuesday.

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

“With the U.S. expecting further rate cuts and some dollar weakness, it is difficult to see where a sudden bout of weakness in the rand will happen, bar the scoring of local own goals,” Wichard Cilliers, head of market risk at TreasuryONE, said.

“However, the markets are on a knife-edge, and headlines will drive markets in the short term,” Cilliers added.

## Rand extends gains after business confidence, retail sales data

The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry reported a rise in the country’s business confidence in July, helped by higher new vehicle sales, rising manufacturing output, strong precious metals prices and well-contained inflation.

Separately, Statistics South Africa figures showed on Wednesday that retail sales rose 1.6 per cent year-on-year in June after rising by a revised 4.3 per cent in May.

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange’s Top-40 index was last up 1.2 per cent. South Africa’s benchmark 2035 government bond was also stronger, with the yield down 4.5 basis points to 9.62 per cent. (Reuters)



▲ A South African two rand coin is seen in this illustration picture.

# Dollar slips to two-week low as investors eye Fed cut

By Joice Alves

LONDON — The dollar fell to a two-week low on Wednesday after a tame reading on U.S. inflation bolstered expectations of a Federal Reserve rate cut next month, with President Donald Trump’s attempts to extend his grip over U.S. institutions also undermining the currency.

The dollar index, measuring the currency against a basket of peers, fell to 97.62, its lowest since July 28, extending its 0.5 per cent fall on Tuesday. It was last down 0.3 per cent at 97.70.

U.S. consumer prices increased marginally in July, data showed on Tuesday, in line with forecasts and as the pass-through from Trump’s sweeping tariffs to goods prices has so far been limited.

Investors eyeing imminent Fed cuts moved to price in a 98 per cent chance the central bank would ease rates next month, according to LSEG data.

Also eroding investor confidence in the dollar were Trump’s latest attempts to undermine Fed independence, after White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said on Tuesday that the president was considering a



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

lawsuit against Fed Chair Jerome Powell in relation to his management of renovations at the central bank’s Washington headquarters.

Trump has been at loggerheads with Powell and has repeatedly lambasted him for not easing rates sooner.

Michael Pfister, FX analyst at Commerzbank, said these political developments carried echoes of autocratic countries, where heads of statistics agencies

or central banks are replaced and critical data series often discontinued or manipulated.

“I’m not saying that this will necessarily happen here. But the developments of the last few days and weeks do not exactly fill me with optimism about the future, or the U.S. dollar,” Pfister said.

Trump also hit out at Goldman Sachs (GS.N), opens new tab CEO David Solomon, saying the bank had been wrong to predict

U.S. tariffs would hurt the economy. Trump questioned whether Solomon should lead the Wall Street institution.

Elsewhere, the dollar’s weakness supported the euro and sterling. The single currency was last up 0.4 per cent to \$1.1719, briefly hitting its highest since July 28. Similarly, the British currency rose 0.5 per cent to \$1.3570, briefly hitting its highest since July 24.

Britain’s jobs market weakened again though wage growth stayed strong, according to data on Tuesday, underscoring why the Bank of England is so cautious about cutting interest rates.

The Australian dollar was up 0.4 per cent to \$0.6556, while the New Zealand dollar rose 0.6 per cent to \$0.5989.

The Reserve Bank of Australia on Tuesday cut interest rates as expected, and signalled further policy easing might be needed to meet its inflation and employment goals as the economy lost some momentum.

In cryptocurrencies, ether scaled a nearly four-year high of \$4,710.

“Ethereum’s quiet breakout is being fuelled by real-world adoption and capital confidence,” said Gracie Lin, Singapore CEO of crypto exchange OKX.

“On our platform, ETH has now overtaken BTC as the most traded asset over the past month.” (Reuters)



# Eswatini Mobile to Boost Jobs, Connectivity in Nhlangano

By EDN Reporter

**THE people of Nhlangano will soon enjoy better network coverage and new job opportunities as Eswatini Mobile moves ahead with plans to build two new base stations in the Shiselweni Region.**

During a visit to Nhlangano on Monday, Eswatini Mobile executives confirmed that the two sites will be built at Sivivaneni and FTM, creating employment for 10 new agents in the town.

Chief Executive Officer Sydney Sichula said the project was part of the company's commitment to answer His Majesty King Mswati III's call to fight unemployment and move the country towards first world standards.

"We are not just putting up base stations, we are investing in people," Sichula said. "These 10 jobs are a starting point, but the improved connectivity will also help businesses grow and open the door for even more opportunities."

A base station is the key infrastructure that allows mobile phones and other wireless devices to connect to a network. It sends and receives radio signals, enabling calls, text messages, and internet access. Without enough base stations, customers experience weak signals, dropped calls, and slow internet.

By building two more in Nhlangano, Eswatini Mobile aims to ensure stronger signals, faster data speeds, and more reliable communication for residents, businesses, and travellers in the region.

The Nhlangano sites are part of Eswatini Mobile's ongoing nationwide expansion. The company is currently rolling out 28 new base stations countrywide, having already erected five in different regions, at Nkoyoyo Palace in the Hhohho Region, Matjodvweni, Manzini Police Station, Moneni, and Dvokolwako in the Lubombo region. More will be added as part of the continuous drive to strengthen network coverage and ensure seamless connectivity for all customers.

While assessing the sites, the executives took time to speak directly with residents and customers, many of whom raised concerns about weak network coverage in parts of Shiselweni. The CEO assured them that the new infrastructure would significantly improve connectivity.

The visit also highlighted the impact Eswatini Mobile has already had in Nhlangano. The executives met with one of the town's longest-serving distributors, Kwanele Vilakati, who has been with the company since 2017.



▲ The Executives interacted with vendors and agents on the ground.



▲ Businessman Msimisi Kunene who has been a distributor since 2017.



▲ Residents and customers were assured that coverage would be strengthened in Nhlangano and the Shiselweni region as a whole.

Vilakati is now the largest distributor in Nhlangano, operating four working stations that supply airtime and SIM cards to numerous vendors in the area.

"I sell over E400,000 worth of products every month," he shared with a smile.

"With the commission I've earned over the years, I've managed to build a house, pay lobola, and I'm now preparing for my wedding. Eswatini Mobile has truly

changed my life."

Sichula said stories like Vilakati's were proof that the company's network expansion went beyond technology, it touched lives.

Before wrapping up their visit, Eswatini Mobile executives left a lasting mark on the town by branding it in the company's signature red, a move aimed at energising the community and building excitement for the upcoming changes.

The two new base stations are expected to be operational soon, bringing with them stronger signals, faster internet, and the promise of economic growth for Nhlangano.

"Connectivity is not just about calls and data, it's about connecting people to opportunities, and Nhlangano is next in line for that change," added Sichula.

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500MB Anytime Data	1.25GB Anytime Data	3.5GB Anytime Data	7.5GB Anytime Data	10GB Anytime Data	Anytime Data
500MB Night Data (8pm - 7am)	1.25GB Night Data (8pm - 7am)	3.5GB Night Data (8pm - 7am)	7.5GB Night Data (8pm - 7am)	10GB Night Data (8pm - 7am)	Unlimited On-net Minutes
100 On-net Minutes	250 On-net Minutes	300 On-net Minutes	600 On-net Minutes	Unlimited On-net Minutes	200 Off-net Minutes
10 Off-net Minutes	30 Off-net Minutes	60 Off-net Minutes	90 Off-net Minutes	100 Off-net Minutes	200 SMSes
20 SMSes	60 SMSes	90 SMSes	120 SMSes	180 SMSes	
	Unlimited On-net Minutes on weekends only	Unlimited On-net Minutes on weekends only	Unlimited On-net Minutes on weekends only		

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# Amazon adds perishable foods to same-day delivery to take on Instacart

**SUBSCRIBERS to Amazon.com's, opens new tab Prime service can now get strawberries, milk, meats and frozen dinners on the same day they order them as the company expands its fast-delivery option to perishable food items, Amazon said on Wednesday.**

It is the latest move by Amazon to compete with delivery services offered by Walmart+ (WMT.N), opens new tab and Instacart.

The new same-day delivery service is free for Prime members, who pay \$14.99 monthly or \$149 annually, for orders over \$25. Shoppers without a Prime membership have to pay a \$12.99 fee, regardless of order size, to use the new service. Walmart's membership service, Walmart+, costs \$98 a year and offers same-day delivery in under three hours - with some orders arriving in as little as 30 minutes.

As of Wednesday, Amazon shoppers in more than 1,000 U.S. cities - including Phoenix; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Tampa, Florida - are able to obtain same-day delivery of perishable food items. The company plans to expand the service to 2,300 cities by the end of the year.

Previously, Prime subscribers' perishable grocery orders were fulfilled through Amazon Fresh or Whole Foods Market, but they had to pay an additional \$9.99 per month on their subscription to receive free deliveries on grocery orders that totaled more than \$35, according to the company's website. Now the additional service will complete orders through its same-day delivery logistics network.

"This marks a major expansion for Amazon's digital grocery service, largely because it's being offered to its massive Prime member base at no additional cost," said Blake Droesch, analyst with eMarketer. "Notably, Amazon has lowered the minimum order threshold to just \$25 - a move that directly threatens Instacart by enabling customers to use Amazon for quick, one-off purchases, a core part of Instacart's value proposition."

Brian Mulberry, portfolio manager at Zacks Investment Management, said the new offer is likely to increase Prime's membership, but added that ensuring that the service is high-quality will be critical for growth.

"The product update today decreases the barrier to entry for Prime and non-Prime users to buy groceries from Amazon and will likely pressure Uber Eats and Doordash's (DASH.O), opens new tab margins," said Stephen Ju, analyst at UBS.

Amazon shares were up 1% on Wednesday while shares of competitors in the grocery-delivery category lost ground. Shares of Instacart, also known as Maplebear (CART.O), opens new tab, were down 10.2%, while shares of Kroger (KR.N), opens new tab and Doordash were both down 4.4%. Walmart shares were down 2% and shares of Uber (UBER.N), opens new tab, parent of Uber Eats, were down 1%.

Amazon announced in June it is investing \$4 billion to bring same-day and next-day delivery services to more than 4,000 rural U.S. communities by the end of the year.

In May, Walmart said it will soon be able



▲ A downtown building is wrapped in Amazon Prime advertising ahead of Comic-Con International, in San Diego, California, U.S.

to offer delivery within three hours to 95% of the U.S. population, and that faster delivery speeds are helping drive its business.

Amazon shoppers "can order milk alongside electronics ... and check out with one cart and have everything delivered to their doorstep within hours," Doug Herrington,

CEO of Worldwide Amazon Stores, said in a press release.

While the company is focusing on its U.S. grocery experience, it is facing hurdles in the UK with its suppliers, a study by British grocery regulator the Groceries Code Adjudicator found. (Reuters)

## Jim Lovell, commander of NASA's Apollo 13 moon mission

**AMERICAN astronaut Jim Lovell, commander of the failed 1970 mission to the moon that nearly ended in disaster but became an inspirational saga of survival and the basis for the hit movie "Apollo 13," has died at the age of 97, NASA said on Friday.**

Hollywood superstar Tom Hanks played Lovell in director Ron Howard's acclaimed 1995 film. It recounted NASA's Apollo 13 mission, which was planned as humankind's third lunar landing but went horribly wrong when an onboard explosion on the way to the moon put the lives of the three astronauts in grave danger.

Lovell and crew mates Jack Swigert and Fred Haise endured frigid, cramped conditions, dehydration and hunger for 3-1/2 days while concocting with Mission Control in Houston ingenious solutions to bring the crippled spacecraft safely back to Earth.

"A 'successful failure' describes exactly what (Apollo) 13 was - because it was a failure in its initial mission - nothing had really been accomplished," Lovell told Reuters in 2010 in an interview marking the 40th anniversary of the flight.

The outcome, the former Navy test pilot said, was "a great success in the ability of people to take an almost-certain catastrophe and turn it into a successful recovery."

The Apollo 13 mission came nine months after Neil Armstrong had become the first person to walk on the moon when he took "one giant leap for mankind" during the Apollo 11 mission on July 20, 1969.

There was drama even before Apollo 13's launch on April 11, 1970. Days earlier, the backup lunar module pilot inadvertently exposed the crew to German measles but Lovell and Haise were immune to it. Ken Mattingly, the command module pilot, had



▲ Apollo 13 astronaut Jim Lovell (L to R), former NASA Administrator Dan Goldin, Sen. John Glenn and NASA Administrator Charles Bolden talk at a private memorial service celebrating the life of Neil Armstrong at the Camargo Club in Cincinnati, Ohio

no immunity to measles and was replaced at the last minute by rookie astronaut Swigert.

The mission generally went smoothly for its first two days. But moments after the crew finished a TV broadcast showing how they lived in space, an exposed wire in a command module oxygen tank sparked an explosion that badly damaged the spacecraft 200,000 miles (320,000 km) from Earth. The accident not only ruined their chances of landing on the moon but imperiled their lives.

"Suddenly there's a 'hiss-bang. And the spacecraft rocks back and forth,'" Lovell said in a 1999 NASA oral history interview. "The lights come on and jets fire. And I looked at Haise to see if he knew what caused it. He had no idea. Looked at Jack Swigert. He had no idea. And then, of course, things started

to happen."

"HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM"

Swigert saw a warning light and told Mission Control: "Houston, we've had a problem here." In the movie, the line is instead attributed to Lovell and famously delivered by Hanks - slightly reworded - as: "Houston, we have a problem."

With a dangerous loss of power, the three astronauts abandoned the command module and went to the lunar module - designed for two men to land on the moon. They used it as a lifeboat for a harrowing 3-1/2 day return to Earth.

The astronauts and the U.S. space agency experts in Houston scrambled to figure out how to get the crew safely home with a limited amount of equipment at their disposal.

Electrical systems were turned off to save

energy, sending temperatures plummeting to near freezing. Water was drastically rationed, food was short and sleep was nearly impossible. The crew had to contrive a filter system to remove high levels of carbon dioxide that could have proven deadly.

"The thought crossed our mind that we were in deep trouble. But we never dwelled on it," Lovell said in the NASA interview. "We never admitted to ourselves that, 'Hey, we're not going to make it.' Well, only one time - when Fred looked at ... the lunar module and found out we had about 45 hours worth of power and we were 90 hours from home."

People worldwide were captivated by the events unfolding in space - and got a happy ending. The astronauts altered course to fly a single time around the moon and back to Earth, splashing down in the Pacific Ocean near Samoa on April 17, 1970.

Lovell never got another chance to walk on the moon after Apollo 13, which was his fourth and final space trip.

His first trip had been the Gemini 7 mission in 1965, featuring the first link-up of two manned spacecraft. His second was Gemini 12 in 1966, the last of the programs that led to the Apollo moon missions.

Lovell's third mission was Apollo 8 in December 1968, the first to orbit the moon. During a telecast to Earth from their spacecraft on Christmas Eve, Lovell and crew mates Frank Borman and William Anders read verses from the Bible's Book of Genesis.

Lovell, who later had a moon crater named in his honor, retired as an astronaut in 1973, working first for a harbor towing company and then in telecommunications.

(Reuters)



# Trump wants Ukraine to have say on territory talks with Russia, Macron says

U.S. President Donald Trump has said Ukraine must be involved in talks about land in any truce deal with Russia, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Wednesday, suggesting Kyiv and its European allies had got their message across before a superpower summit.

The comments were among the first indications of what came out of talks between Trump, European leaders and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, intended to influence Trump as he prepares to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska on Friday.

Trump's insistence on involving Ukraine, if confirmed, could bring a measure of relief to Ukraine and its allies, who have feared that Trump and Putin could reach a deal that sells out Europe's and Ukraine's security interests and proposes to carve up Ukrainian territory.

Trump and Putin are due to discuss how to end the three-and-a-half-year-old conflict, the biggest in Europe since World War Two. Trump has said both sides will have to swap land to end fighting that has cost tens

of thousands of lives and displaced millions.

On a day of intense diplomacy, Zelenskiy flew into Berlin for German-hosted virtual meetings with European leaders and then with Trump.

The Europeans worry that a land swap could leave Russia with almost a fifth of Ukraine, rewarding it for almost 11 years of efforts to seize Ukrainian territory, and embolden Putin to expand further west into the future.

"The second point on which things were very clear, as expressed by President Trump, is that territories belonging to Ukraine cannot be negotiated and will only be negotiated by the Ukrainian president," Macron said.

"There are currently no serious territorial exchange schemes on the table."

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Trump would prioritise reaching a ceasefire on Friday, adding that there was no question of legally recognising Russia's territorial holdings.

Zelenskiy said there should be a three-way meeting between himself, Putin and Trump.

Merz said Ukraine was prepared to negotiate on territorial issues, but "legal recognition of Russian occupation is not up for



▲ French President Emmanuel Macron, Antonio Costa, President of the European Council, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot, and France's Minister of Armed Forces Sebastien Lecornu attend a video conference with U.S. President Donald Trump, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and European Union leaders about the upcoming Trump-Putin meeting on Ukraine, at Fort de Bregancon in Bormes-les-Mimosas, France.

debate".

"If the United States of America now works towards a peace in Ukraine that safeguards European and Ukrainian interests, he

can count on our full support in this endeavour," Merz said at a joint press conference with Zelenskiy.

(Reuters)

## Inside the mine that feeds the tech world – and funds Congo's rebels

UNDER the watchful eye of M23 rebels in the hills around the Congolese town of Rubaya, a line of men in rubber boots ferry sacks full of crushed rocks up winding paths cut into the slopes.

The laborers are hauling coltan ore, a mineral that powers the modern world. The ore will be loaded onto motorbikes and eventually shipped thousands of kilometers away to Asia. There it's processed into tantalum, a heat-resistant metal that fetches more than \$300 a kilogram and is in high demand by makers of mobile phones, computers, aerospace components and gas turbines.

Rubaya produces around 15% of the world's coltan, all dug manually by impoverished locals who earn a few dollars per day. Control of this mine is the biggest prize in a long-running conflict in this central African nation.

The area was seized in April 2024 by M23, a rebel group the United Nations says has plundered Rubaya's riches to help fund its insurgency, backed by the government of neighboring Rwanda. The heavily-armed rebels, whose stated aim is to overthrow the government in Kinshasa and ensure the safety of the Congolese Tutsi minority, captured even more mineral-rich territory in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) this year.

The region and its mineral wealth are in the spotlight as M23 and the DRC have pledged to sign a peace deal at a ceremony in Qatar's capital, Doha, this month. The United States is mediating parallel talks between Congo and Rwanda, dangling potentially billions of dollars in investment if hostilities cease.

The United States Treasury on



▲ A laborer grasps a sack of coltan ore at a mine near the town of Rubaya in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Tuesday sanctioned other alleged participants in minerals smuggling in Congo, including PARECO-FF, a pro-government Congolese militia that the U.S. said controlled the Rubaya mining site from 2022 to early 2024, prior to M23's takeover.

PARECO-FF could not be reached for comment.

Asked at a press briefing why Washington was targeting PARECO-FF rather than M23, a senior U.S. government official noted that M23 has been under U.S. sanctions since 2013 for fueling conflict in the region.

"The Treasury Department will not hesitate to take action against groups that deny the United States and our allies access to the critical minerals vital for our national defense," John K. Hurley, undersecretary of the Treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, said in a separate statement.

Jason Stearns, a former U.N. investigator in Congo, said the fact that M23 was not targeted by the new mining-related sanctions was surprising, adding the move might be aimed at keeping the Doha talks

on track.

M23's advance poses the most serious threat to the Kinshasa government in at least two decades of conflict rooted in Rwanda's 1994 genocide, which saw around 1 million of Rwanda's Tutsi ethnic group killed by Hutu militias.

Rwanda's government has long denied that it traffics in coltan looted from its neighbor or that it backs M23. But Rwanda's ruling party, mainly headed by Tutsis, shares the same concerns as the Tutsi-dominated M23 insurgents over the purported threat posed by rival Hutu groups operating in eastern Congo. A July 3 U.N. report, reviewed by Reuters, says that as of April, Rwanda had placed at least 1,000 to 1,500 troops in Congo's rebel-controlled areas.

M23 now controls two key Congolese cities – Goma and Bukavu – on the border with Rwanda. U.N. investigators say that it is through these cities that Congolese minerals are illegally trucked to Rwanda,

(Reuters)



▲ Smoke rises after an Israeli air strike in north Gaza, as seen from Israel's border with Gaza, Israel.

## Israel pounds Gaza City, 123 dead in last 24 hours

ISRAEL'S military pounded Gaza City on Wednesday prior to a planned takeover, with another 123 people killed in the last day according to the Gaza health ministry, while militant group Hamas held further talks with Egyptian mediators.

The 24-hour death toll was the worst in a week and added to the massive fatalities from the nearly two-year war that has shattered the enclave housing more than 2 million Palestinians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated an idea – also enthusiastically floated by U.S. President Donald Trump – that Palestinians should simply leave.

"They're not being pushed

out, they'll be allowed to exit," he told Israeli television channel i24NEWS. "All those who are concerned for the Palestinians and say they want to help the Palestinians should open their gates and stop lecturing us."

Arabs and many world leaders are aghast at the idea of displacing the Gaza population, which Palestinians say would be like another "Nakba" (catastrophe) when hundreds of thousands fled or were forced out during a 1948 war.

Israel's planned re-seizure of Gaza City – which it took in the early days of the war before withdrawing – is probably weeks away, officials say. That means a ceasefire is still possible though talks have been floundering and conflict still rages.

(Reuters)



# Gogo & S'lwane to host Mlawula Campfire Festival

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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ESWATINI'S beloved comedian duo, Gogo & S'lwane is set to host the highly anticipated Mlawula Campfire Festival.

Now in its sixth edition, the festival is renowned for its blend of adventure, community spirit, and the stunning backdrop of the Mlawula Nature Reserve. Scheduled for September 26-28, 2025, the festival will take place at Siphiso Campsite, nestled within the lush confines of the Mlawula Nature Reserve. This picturesque setting provides the perfect environment for a weekend filled with camaraderie and celebration, attracting both seasoned outdoor enthusiasts and families looking for a unique escape into nature.

The Mlawula Campfire Festival has established itself as a must-attend event, drawing participants from across the region to experience the magic of the wilderness. This year, the festival aims to deepen its connection with nature and community, offering a diverse range of activities and entertainment that cater to all ages and interests.

Gogo & S'lwane, known for their engaging performances and infectious humour, are expected to bring a lively atmosphere to the festival, enhancing the overall experience for attendees. This year's festival promises an extensive lineup of activities designed to immerse attendees in the beauty of the Mlawula Nature Reserve.

Participants can look forward to invigorating hikes through the reserve's stunning landscapes, providing an opportunity to witness the rich flora and fauna that thrive in this protected area. Guided by knowledgeable local experts, these hikes will not only showcase the



▲ Comedians Gogo & S'lwane.

natural beauty of the reserve but also educate attendees about the importance of conservation.

### Sessions

For those seeking a more relaxed experience, the festival will offer yoga and aerobics sessions set against the tranquil backdrop of the reserve. These sessions are

designed to help participants unwind and rejuvenate, fostering a sense of well-being and connection to nature. In addition to physical activities, the festival will feature workshops and demonstrations that highlight local crafts, cuisine, and cultural practices, allowing attendees to engage with the rich heritage of Eswatini.

## ‘Siyabonga Gogo’ visuals reach 20 000 views

ESWATINI'S renowned artist Sancheziey has released an official music video for his trending song ‘Siyabonga Gogo,’ and has since reached 20 000 views on YouTube in 10 days.

Sancheziey is also preparing to unveil his much-awaited album, ‘Salukazana.’ The listening session for ‘Salukazana’ is set for August 10, 2025, at noon, taking place at the Asante Guest House in Manzini. Following this event, the official release of the album will follow closely on August 16, 2025.

After the massive success of his hit single ‘Siyabonga Gogo,’ which resonated deeply with fans and critics alike, Sancheziey is poised to elevate his artistry with this new project. ‘Salukazana’ is described as a traditional Swati cultural Afropop album, seamlessly blending authentic Swati sounds with Western melodies and African instrumentation. This unique fusion is expected to captivate a diverse audience, further establishing Sancheziey as a key figure in the music scene.

At the core of ‘Salukazana’ are themes of love, relationships, and marriage, drawing inspiration from the emotional depth

presented in ‘Siyabonga Gogo.’ Reflecting on the impact of his breakout single, Sanceziey remarked, “The song clearly made a statement, and its breakout was a defining moment for me musically. It brought out the best in me. The song didn’t have a backup, so I had to act fast because of the way people were consuming it; surely, it deserved a follow-up with the same sound.”

### Album

This new album is not merely a collection of songs; it is a heartfelt tribute to the essence of love as depicted in traditional Swati culture. Sanceziey aims to encapsulate the kind of everlasting love often portrayed in films, emphasising the deep emotional connections that characterise Swati relationships. He believes that the love depicted in the album reflects what love should embody in today’s world.

Sanceziey’s commitment to cultural authenticity is evident in the collaborative nature of the album’s production. ‘Salukazana’ is poised to become a staple for traditional weddings, featuring songs that resonate with significant cultural events such as Lobola, Umzimba, Umhlambiso, and Emalobolo.



▲ Sancheziey.



▲ South African comedian Shanray

## Shanray for Eswatini International Comedy Festival

SOUTH African international comedy Shanray has 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 Bongiswa, Darren, Boldwin 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 SibaneSami 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.

### Developments

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

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



# Uncle Waffles teams up with Adidas SA

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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ESWATINI-born DJ and producer Uncle Waffles has officially signed a partnership deal with Adidas South Africa.

This collaboration not only underscores her meteoric rise within the Amapiano genre but also solidifies her status as a global icon in the music industry. Known for her infectious energy and captivating performances, Uncle Waffles, whose real name is Lungelihle Zwane, has become a household name in South Africa and beyond. Recognised globally as the “Princess of Amapiano,” she has played a pivotal role in bringing this uniquely South African genre to the forefront of the global music scene. Her groundbreaking performance at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in 2023 was particularly noteworthy, as she became the first Amapiano DJ to grace the main stage, setting a precedent for future artists in the genre. The partnership with Adidas represents a new chapter in Uncle Waffles’ already impressive career. The collaboration is not merely a branding exercise; it reflects a shared vision of innovation and cultural celebration. Uncle Waffles is featured in Adidas’ global campaign “Superstar: The Original,” which showcases a stunning lineup of cultural heavyweights, including Samuel L. Jackson, Missy Elliott, and K-pop sensation JENNIE. This campaign transcends the mere promotion of sneakers; it celebrates originality and honours the trailblazers who define what it means to be an icon. In striking black-and-white imagery, Uncle Waffles showcased her signature style while wearing the classic Superstar trainers, a timeless icon. This visual aesthetic resonates with her dynamic persona and aligns seamlessly with the brand’s legacy,



▲ Uncle Waffles.

creating a campaign that is both memorable and impactful. The partnership with Adidas is expected to further elevate her brand, providing her with a platform to reach new audiences and expand her influence.

Uncle Waffles’ rise to fame has been nothing short of phenomenal. Since her debut, she has garnered acclaim from

industry giants, including Drake, Beyoncé, and Ciara, all of whom have acknowledged her unique talent and contributions to music. Her ability to blend traditional Amapiano sounds with contemporary beats has not only captivated audiences but has also paved the way for a new generation of artists within the genre.

## Eswatini Farmers Market trader applications now open

THE Eswatini Farmers Market has officially opened its doors for trader applications, inviting local entrepreneurs to participate in one of the most anticipated cultural events of the year.

Aspiring traders can submit their applications via email at tradersmeltingc@gmail.com, marking the beginning of a vibrant opportunity for those looking to showcase their products and contribute to the rich tapestry of Eswatini’s heritage. Scheduled to take place on October 11, 2025, the Eswatini Farmers Market promises to be a hallmark of cultural celebration and community spirit.

Tickets for this vibrant event are selling rapidly. Early bird VIP tickets have already sold out, and the early bird kids’ tickets have followed suit, leaving only general admission tickets available at E250. The festival will be hosted at Malkerns Country Club, a venue that perfectly complements the event’s ethos of celebrating local culture and community.

In an exclusive interview, Mbekezeli ‘Culolam’ Dlamini, the festival’s director, expressed his excitement for this year’s market. “I am thrilled to announce the return of the Eswatini Farmers Market,



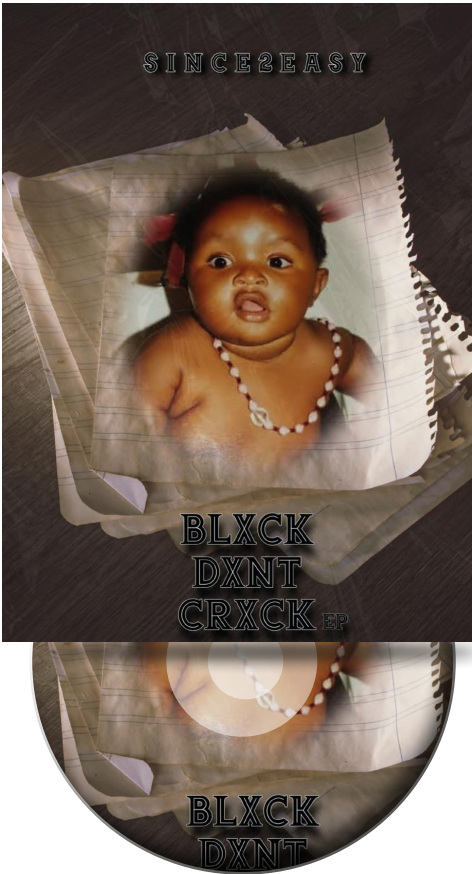
▲ Action during last year’s Eswatini Farmer’s Market at Malkerns Country Club.

and I can assure you that this year’s event will surpass all expectations. Get ready for a day filled with endless excitement and unforgettable moments,” he stated.

The Eswatini Farmers Market is more than just an event; it is a cultural phenomenon that celebrates the rich heritage of Eswatini. Dlamini emphasised the festival’s role in fostering community bonds through music, food, and cultural

exchange. “Every year, we aim to make the festival bigger and better, bringing in new ideas that will leave a lasting legacy and uniqueness for each year,” he remarked.

Dlamini urged the public to secure their tickets early, emphasising the importance of community participation in making the event a success. “People should buy tickets as soon as possible, as this is for us Eswatini,” he stressed.



▲ Since2Easy’s BLXCK DXN’T CRXCK Ep Artwork.

## Since2Easy’s upcoming EP promises powerful message

SINCE2EASY is poised to make waves in the music industry with the upcoming release of his new Extended Play (EP) titled ‘BLXCK DXN’T CRXCK.’

Scheduled for release on September 4, 2025, this highly anticipated project will deliver a powerful message through its hip-hop beats and lyrical depth. The title ‘BLXCK DXN’T CRXCK’ encapsulates the essence of the EP, which centres around themes of resilience and self-identity.

Since2easy explained that the project is a personal testament to not allowing external influences to alter one’s spirit or artistic expression. “The message behind the project is to be unapologetic about what you do and who you are. People will always talk or have an opinion about what you are doing or not doing,” he stated, emphasising the importance of staying true to oneself amidst societal pressures.

### Journey

The artist’s journey to this point has not been without challenges. Reflecting on the creative process, Since2easy revealed that he began working on the EP during a difficult time while he was hospitalised. This experience catalysed his creativity, reminding him that setbacks are merely tests of one’s ability to persevere. “I wanted to remind myself that this is not the end but a test of my ability to keep going,” he shared.

Since2easy has expressed immense gratitude for the support he has received from his fans and the Eswatini music community. He further extended a heartfelt plea for continued support. “People should stream the music to be inspired and also to be reminded that everything God gives you, nobody in this world can take or break. You are exactly who you are supposed to be and where you need to be,” he asserted.



# Nirvana Nokwe shines from SABC toddler to multi-talent queen

**NIRVANA Nokwe was born for the spotlight, and she is making sure it shines with purpose.**

Actress, singer, entrepreneur and all-round creative force, the multi-talented star is building a career that blends glamour with grit.

From recording at the SABC as a toddler to now mastering the business of music, Nirvana is on a mission to bring back the soul and sparkle that once made art unforgettable.

Being a proud member of the iconic Nokwe creative dynasty, Nirvana immersed herself in the world of performance before she could even spell the word.

Nirvana, trained at the tender age of four through her family's outreach programme, Amachiva Youth and Children Arts, was no stranger to the stage and studio.

"I was already recording vocals for TV soundtracks before I even started school," she reveals.

But while some might have settled into one lane, Nirvana was never built for limits.

Nirvana honed her ability to navigate multiple worlds after earning a higher certificate and later a diploma in Screen Arts and Television at the Academy of Sound Engineering (ASE), from interacting with Metro FM producers to impressing casting directors at Generations.

"There was a time when movies and music

felt magical. You could almost touch the feeling they gave you; I want to preserve that," she says.

"It's not just about art; it's about professionalism, ethics, and being a good human. The world is hungry for that kind of intention again."

She took on diverse roles at ASE, ranging from collaborating with sound engineering students on vocal covers to managing the backstage operations of live productions such as Ram Jam and Five Live.

That, she says, taught her a valuable kind of professional empathy.

"When you've been behind the camera and in front of it, you respect the whole process. You notice details others might miss like continuity errors or lighting changes, and you care enough to fix them."

Thanks to ASE's Music Business Masterclass, supported by the Southern African Music Rights Organisation, she is learning the power of contracts, royalties, and revenue streams.

I realised that being known in music circles isn't the same as being ready for business. Once you know your rights and how to negotiate, your posture changes. People start taking you seriously because you take yourself seriously," she says.

Offstage, she is also making waves with



▲Actress, singer, entrepreneur and all-round creative force Nirvana Nokwe.

her semi-secret supper club, connecting changemakers over intimate, curated dinners.

Whether through her music, her television work, or this unique gathering, Nirvana is committed to honouring the magic of the

past while creating an ethical, inclusive future.

"Music, screen, community, spirit – it all works together. And when it's aligned with intention, you can feel it."

(Sunday World)

## Limpopo singer Makhadzi finally gives her no-show DJ the boot

**LIMPOPO singer Makhadzi has fired her DJ after not showing up for work on several occasions.**

Popular Limpopo DJ Snani has been working with BET Award-winning singer Makhadzi for almost four years.

However, over the past year, due to alleged absenteeism and a busy schedule, the Kota To singer has given him the boot.

A close associate revealed to Sunday World that Makhadzi has terminated her contract with Snani after missing several gigs where he was booked as her official DJ. Trouble started almost a year ago when Snani kept missing major gigs.

"He would call in sick for work on the last hour, and the team had to make a plan," the friend said.

Or he would call in sick, but then his

pictures surfaced from another booking. He was not prioritising his job. The entire team, including dancers, back-up singers, and DJs, are full-time staff earning a salary and must always be available. But he continually made excuses.

Snani posted on social media that he no longer works for Makhadzi Entertainment. He said he will be relocating back home to Limpopo.

"Spane Se fedile. Time to go home and start afresh. I am available for bookings If you are looking for a DJ," Snani wrote.

He went on to vent that being a DJ these days requires social media engagement.

"It's no longer about your skills or creativity. They need numbers these days. Get numbers and be well known, then get booked," he said. (Sunday World)



▲Dr Thobile Sifunda is accused of sidelining KwaZulu-Natal artists.

## KZN arts and culture HOD referred artist looking for work to non-government entity

**THE administrative boss of KwaZulu-Natal's department of sport, arts, and culture is accused of referring artists who are looking for gigs to a private entity.**

Dr Thobile Sifunda, the head of the department (HOD), is alleged to be gatekeeping and stifling opportunities for local artists by directing them to the Cultural and Creative Industries Federation of South Africa (CCIFSA) instead of facilitating direct access to departmental gigs.

Sunday World has seen a correspondence from Sifunda instructing an artist to approach CCIFSA to be considered for government gigs, a move that has sparked outrage.

A frustrated artist told Sunday World: "We tried repeatedly to get gigs through the KZN DSAC [department of sport, arts, and culture] but kept hitting a wall. We approached Dr Sifunda directly after officials

turned us away.

"To our shock, she asked us to go through CCIFSA. When the top official refers artists to a private organisation, that means clear gatekeeping.

"This text isn't just proof; it shows she's compromised and unfit to lead. She's clearly prioritising CCIFSA over local artists," alleged the artist.

Another artist supported these claims, sharing their experience. "Last year, I got an invitation to perform overseas but lacked the funds.

"I applied to KZN DSAC for funding but got no response. When I visited their offices, an official bluntly told me to deal with CCIFSA since they make the decisions for the department. I didn't pursue it further.

"I want to stress that CCIFSA has undue control over KZN DSAC; they decide who receives gigs and funding in KZN. They're basically running the department. (Sunday



▲ Limpopo singer Makhadzi has fired her DJ after not showing up for work on several occasions.



What Are Carbs?

THEY'RE one of three types of food that give your body energy. The other two are proteins and fats. Together, they provide the fuel your body uses to build and repair itself. Carbs break down into glucose (sugar) that you can use right away.

Your Body's Fuel

Your body runs on glucose. Your brain, in particular, needs it to work the way it should. Carbohydrates are an almost instant source of it. Your body can break down and use fat for some of the same needs, but not all of them. Plus, fat that's used for fuel makes compounds called ketones that can raise the level of acid in your blood, and that can be unhealthy over the long term.

Workout Prep

Because carbs are a source of energy, they can keep you going strong while you exercise. Experts recommend fueling up 1 to 3 hours beforehand with a combination of carbs and protein, like oatmeal, Greek yogurt, peanut butter, or nuts and raisins.

Full of Nutrients

The best-quality carbs -- berries, vegetables, and whole grains -- are packed with vitamins, fiber, and antioxidants that are important for good health and well-being. Whole grains have fatty acids, magnesium, B vitamins, folate, and zinc. Fruit and starchy veggies have some of those, plus phytonutrients like flavonoids and carotenoids that help prevent disease. If you skip the carbs, you lose out on those nutrients, too.

Simple Carbs

Think of table sugar as simple carbs in pure form. They're very small molecules, which makes them especially easy for your body to break down and use. That means they raise your glucose levels (blood sugar) really fast. Things that sweeten any number of candies, pastries, and desserts are loaded with these kinds of carbs.

Complex Carbs

String together a bunch of simple carbs, and you get these larger molecules. Your body has to break them down into simple carbohydrates and then into glucose before it can use them. This takes longer, which means your blood sugar goes up more slowly and they're less likely to be changed into fat. These kinds of carbs include multigrain breads and pasta, beans, potatoes, and other vegetables.

Storage Tank

Before your body turns leftover glucose from carbs into fat, it stores what it can in your liver in the form of glycogen. This keeps your body going between meals. But your liver can only keep a day or so's worth at a time.

If You Have Too Many

If you overdo the carbs, your blood sugar levels can get too high. This causes your body to make more insulin, which tells your cells to save the extra glucose as fat. That

can be unhealthy if you're already carrying a few extra pounds. It can lead to diabetes and other related health issues.

If You Don't Have Enough

If there aren't enough carbs in your diet, you could get constipated from lack of fiber and nutrients. Your body is also forced to use protein or fat for energy. Proteins are the building blocks of the body. If you use them as fuel, you may not have enough left to make more cells and keep them healthy.

The Right Amount

The number of carbs you need can depend on your gender, size, and how active you are -- and that can change as you get older. But as a general rule, about half your daily calories should come from carbs in fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, and

dairy products. Just make sure to go with healthy, complex carbs and don't overdo the simple ones.

Low-Carb Diets

In theory, fewer carbs mean less sugar. And "ketogenic" diets have been shown to help some people lose weight and control their blood sugar in the short term. But these diets include lots of protein, and your body may need to use stored calcium to digest it. Plus, digesting lots of protein can be hard on your kidneys over time. You also tend to eat more saturated fat to replace the carbs, and that can be unhealthy in the long term, too.

Diabetes and Carbs

If you have this disease, you need to watch your carbs carefully because your

body has trouble keeping your blood sugar at a safe level. If you have too many, your body may not be able to bring your blood sugar down quickly enough. But if your blood sugar gets too low, a glass of juice or another simple carb might be just the thing to kick it back up again. If you have diabetes, talk with your doctor about the best way to manage carbs.

Where to Get Healthy Carbs

Look for unrefined whole grains like quinoa, rye, and barley instead of highly processed white bread and pastries. Whole unprocessed fruits and vegetables are better than juices. And it's a good idea to pass on the high-carb potato foods, especially french fries, in favor of beans, chickpeas, and other legumes.

WebMD

# The truth about Carbs





YOU can do many things to help knee pain, whether it's due to a recent injury or arthritis you've had for years. Follow these 11 dos and don'ts to help your knees feel their best.

# 11 knee pain dos and don'ts

## Don't rest too much.

Too much rest can weaken your muscles, which can in turn increase reinjury. Find an exercise program that is safe for your knees and stick with it. If you're not sure which motions are safe or how much you can do, talk with your doctor or a physical therapist.

## Do exercise.

Cardio exercises strengthen the muscles of the heart, but not the joints. It is weight training mixed with keeping your muscles limber. Cardio is important for keeping your weight stable and you feeling stronger overall. For cardio, some good choices include walking, swimming, water aerobics, stationary cycling, and elliptical machines. Tai chi may also help ease stiffness and improve balance.

## Don't risk a fall.

A painful or unstable knee can make a fall more likely, which can cause more knee damage. Curb your risk of falling by making sure your home is well lit, using handrails on staircases, and using a sturdy ladder or foot stool if you need to reach something from a high shelf.

## Do use "RICE."

Rest, ice, compression, and elevation (RICE) is good for knee pain caused by a minor injury or an arthritis flare. Give your knee some rest, apply ice to reduce swelling, wear a compressive bandage, and keep your knee elevated.

## Don't overlook your weight.

If you're overweight, losing weight reduces the stress on your knee. You don't even need to get to your "ideal" weight. Smaller changes still make a difference.

## Don't be shy about using a walking aid.

A crutch or cane can take the stress off of your knee. Knee splints and braces can also help you stay stable.

## Do consider acupuncture.

This form of traditional Chinese medicine, which involves inserting fine needles at certain points on the body, is widely used to relieve many types of pain and may help knee pain.

## Don't let your shoes make matters worse.

Cushioned insoles can reduce stress on your knees. For knee osteoarthritis, doctors often recommend special insoles that you put in your shoe. To find the appropriate insole, speak with your doctor or a physical therapist.

## Do play with temperature.



For the first 48 to 72 hours after a knee injury, use a cold pack to ease swelling and numb the pain. A plastic bag of ice or frozen peas works well. Use it for 15 to 20 minutes three or four times a day. Wrap your ice pack in a towel to be kind to your skin. After that, you can heat things up with a warm bath, heating pad, or warm towel for 15 to 20 minutes, three or four times a day.

## Don't jar your joint(s).

High-impact exercises can further injure

painful knees. Avoid jarring exercises such as running, jumping, and kickboxing. Also avoid doing exercises such as lunges and deep squats that put a lot of stress on your knees. These can worsen pain and, if not done correctly, cause injury.

## Do get expert advice.

If your knee pain is new, get a doctor to check it out. It's best to know what you're dealing with ASAP so you can prevent any more damage.

WebMD

## ... Caring for your joints

THESE nine tips can help you guard your joints against injury and keep them healthy for years to come.

### You and Your Joints

A joint is the connection between two bones. Joints and their surrounding structures allow you to bend your elbows and knees, wiggle your hips, bend your back, turn your head, and wave your fingers to say bye-bye. Smooth tissue called cartilage and synovium and a lubricant called synovial fluid cushion the joints so bones do not rub together. But increasing age, injury, or carrying too much weight can wear and tear your cartilage. This can lead to a reaction that can damage your joints and lead to arthritis. The best way to care for your joints is to keep them and your muscles, ligaments, and bones strong and stable. Here are some tips for good joint health.

### Watch Your Weight for Healthy Joints

Keeping your weight within a healthy range is the best thing you can do for your joints. Weight-bearing joints, such as your knees, hips, and back, have to support some, if not all, of your body weight. That's why so many overweight people have problems with these areas of the body.

The higher the number on your bathroom scale, the more wear and tear you put on your joints. Losing weight reduces pressure on your knees, hips, and back and helps prevent joint injury. Research has shown that with every pound gained, a person puts four times more stress on the knees.

### Exercise for Healthy Joints

Exercise can help you lose extra pounds and maintain a healthy weight. Some research suggests that aerobic exercise -- activities that get your heart rate up -- can reduce joint swelling. If your joints bother you, opt for exercises that won't give your joints a pounding. Instead of step aerobics, try low-impact exercises such as swimming or bicycling. Another healthy idea: Don't sit still! Couch potatoes, computer addicts, and all who remain glued to a chair all day long have a high risk for joint pain. Less movement means more stiffness in your joints. So get up and get moving. Change positions frequently. Take frequent breaks at work, and stretch or go for a short walk. If you can't leave the office, try taking phone calls while standing.

### Build Muscles to Support Joints

Strong muscles support your joints. If you don't have enough muscle, your joints

take a pounding, especially your spine, hips, and knees, which must support your entire body weight. Weight training exercises help build muscle and keep your muscles and surrounding ligaments strong.

That way, your joints don't have to do all the work.

A certified personal trainer can show you the best exercises for healthy joints and how to do them correctly. Doing them incorrectly increases the chance of injury.

### Help Joints With a Strong Core

Make sure your exercise routine includes activities that strengthen your core. That includes your chest, back, and abdomen.

Stronger abs and back muscles help you keep your balance and prevent falls that can damage your joints.

### Know Your Limits for Your Joints' Sake

Certain exercises and activities might just be too tough for your joints to handle at first. Go slow. Modify exercises that cause joint pain. Ask a trainer, physical therapist, or coach to help you with modifications. You will likely feel some muscle pain after working out for a few days, especially the second and third day. Listen to your body, and learn the difference between "threatening pain" and good muscle-building pain.

### Perfect Your Posture for Good Joints

Slouching is not good for your joints. Standing and sitting up straight protect your joints from your neck to your knees. Good posture also helps guard your hip joints and back muscles.

Posture is also important when lifting and carrying. For example, if you use a backpack, be sure to put it over both shoulders instead of slinging it over one. Being lopsided puts more stress on your joints. When lifting, use the biggest muscles in your body by bending at your knees instead of bending your back.

### Protecting Your Body Protects Joints

Make sure you always wear a helmet, knee pads, and elbow and wrist pads when taking part in high-risk activities, including work-related ones such as repetitive kneeling or squatting. Even if you think you're a pro on a bicycle or on a pair of Rollerblades, you should never go without safety gear. Hit the wrong bump in the road, and you could be headed for a lifetime of trouble. Serious injuries or several minor injuries can damage cartilage. Injuries can lead to long-term joint problems.

Elbow and wrist braces, or guards, also help reduce stress on your joints during activities.

WebMD



# News In Pictures



▲ Firefighters work to extinguish a wildfire approaching Trancoso, Portugal.



▲ A western lowland gorilla eats ice cream that was brought to its enclosure during a heatwave, at Prague Zoo, Czech Republic.



▲ U.S. Army National Guard Humvees park near the Washington Monument after President Trump announced a federal takeover of the Metropolitan Police Department under the Home Rule Act to assist with crime prevention in the nation's capital.



▲ A Palestinian boy runs as aid packages are dropped from an airplane, amid a hunger crisis, in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip.



▲ A woman covers her mouth, while locals evacuate, as wildfire continues to burn, in Delvina, Albania.



# Man Utd in ‘no man’s land’ due to lack of plan, says Rashford

MARCUS Rashford decried Manchester United’s lack of strategy as leaving the English giants in “no man’s land” after joining Barcelona on loan.

The 27-year-old, who played 426 times for United after coming through the club’s academy, left Old Trafford in January for a loan spell at Aston Villa after falling out of favour with new manager Ruben Amorim.

United went on to have their worst season since being relegated in 1973/74 as they finished 15th in the Premier League and failed to qualify for European competition.

Rashford believes the root of United’s problems is in the instability caused by appointing six different managers since Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

“We have been way below where we deem United to be but then if you take a step back, which I’ve been able to do, especially over these last six months, what do you expect?” Rashford told the Rest Is Football podcast.

“When Liverpool went through this, they got (Jurgen) Klopp, they stuck with him. They didn’t win in the beginning. People only remember his final few years when he was competing with (Manchester) City and winning the biggest trophies.

“To start a transition, you have to make a plan and stick to it. It’s not easy to do. But this is where I speak about being realistic with what your situation is.

“We’ve had that many different



▲ Marcus Rashford.

managers, different ideas and different strategies to win that you end up in no man’s land.”

United have failed to even contend for the Premier League title or the Champions League since Ferguson’s departure.

Rashford is one of the few success stories for the Red Devils in that time.

After breaking into the team as an 18-year-old in 2016, he went on to score 138 goals for the club, winning two FA Cups and two League Cups.

However, he believes the winning culture embedded during Ferguson’s 27-year tenure has been worn away.

“When Ferguson was in charge,

not only were there principles for the first team but they were for the whole academy,” Rashford added.

“Any team that has been successful over a period of time, they have principles that mean that any coach or player that comes in has to align to or add to the principles.

“At times, United were hungry to win... but it was reactionary. If your direction is always changing, you can’t expect to win the league.”

Rashford appears to have played his last game for United with his move to Spanish champions Barca containing a option to buy for a reported 35 million euros (£30 million, \$41 million). (Supersport)

# Quality costs AmaZulu as chances begging says Zwane

AMAZULU coach Arthur Zwane said a difference in quality proved his side undoing as they lost 2-0 to champions Mamelodi Sundowns in the Betway Premiership on Tuesday.

AmaZulu kept their hosts at bay until early in the second half at Loftus Versfeld but Iqraam Rayners scored and Sundowns followed up with a late second goal from Tashreeq Matthews to take al three points.

“You could see the difference was in quality of Sundowns and our quality as well, having young players that are still learning and trying to find their way up at this level,” said Zwane.

“So it was never going to be an easy, also away from home as well. I think we started off well. We had a plan, obviously, to allow Sundowns have the ball, wait for the right moment to exploit the space – because you can’t play pound to pound with them in terms of the quality – or wait for the right moment as well.”

Zwane felt his side had clear cut chances and that they had Sundowns worried with the score goal-less at halftime.

“You could see their frustration even from the bench. What was key for us was to make sure that we don’t concede a goal in the first 20



▲ AmaZulu coach Arthur Zwane.

minutes of the second half but then we did concede and were chasing shadows at some point.

“But again, I think we got back to our structure. We remembered what was working for us. And we got about two chances again that we could have taken. We should have gotten an equaliser, and even the winner, before they got their second goal.”

He conceded, however, that chasing down Sundowns sapped their energy.

“When you keep on defending, your energy levels drop at some point and you suffer lapses of concentration. The quality of Sundowns’ composure was the difference between us. We were always too hasty, you know, to get rid of the ball. Sometimes we just literally gave them the ball. They were not taking the ball from us, but just applying pressure and we lost the ball, we gave it away cheaply,” Zwane said.

(Supersport)

# Sizzling back nine helps Maart to early Big Easy lead at Reading

A sparkling back nine of six-under-par 29 helped Mark Maart sign for a low seven-under 64, two shots clear of Kian Rose at Reading Country Club, where the sixth tournament of the Betway Big Easy Tour is being played.

Maart started off brightly in Alberton, going four-under in his first four holes, thanks to back-to-back birdies on the third and fourth holes.

A bogey on the par-three seventh visited Maart’s card, threatening to derail his early progress. He held his nerve to walk away with important pars on eight and nine.

After the turn, Maart looked to have found something. He parred the 10th, then made a hat-trick of birdies from the 11th through 13th. He was not done yet, as he holed out for eagle on the par-four 17th before sealing his round with a birdie on 18. He is currently the leader on both the Tour’s Courier Guy Order of Merit and Fortress Rookie of the Year standings.

Now he will tee it up in the Sunshine Tour’s most historic series of pro-am tournaments the Vodacom Origins of Golf.

And a bit of research will tell him that this series, which dates back to 2004, has produced champions who have gone on to global success and even Major glory.

But the only reason Carerra is even in Parys this week is because of a plan he and a few Colombian golf friends had.

“I had a couple of friends from Colombia who were going to come to the Sunshine Tour Qualifying School in April this year. We decided on the Sunshine Tour because it gives you something more and you can jump to another level like the HotelPlanner Tour, DP World Tour and even the PGA Tour. It also has a lot of tournaments so you get into the rhythm of playing the whole year, and the

prize money is very good too,” says Carrera.

“I just wanted to get the game going,” said Maart, who is a member of the Papwa Sewgolum Class.

“I had a solid game plan today, and I stuck to the game plan. I made a few good putts today; I hit a few good shots also. Ultimately, it all just came together today.

“A round like this is a good boost. We don’t always get a round like this, so it’s a big confidence-booster going into tomorrow.

And, my caddie was great today. He gave me a little pep-talk there on the final three holes, like ‘hey, you need to stop talking now and focus. So, it was a good round of golf today.”

With only a slim two-stroke margin separating him from Rose, who was just as solid on Tuesday, Maark knows not to get ahead of himself.

“I’m going to have an early night tonight,” he said of his plan going into the penultimate round of this 54-hole event. “Then, I just want to come out again with the same game plan tomorrow and whatever happens, happens.”

Rose’s five-under 66 not only earned him the second spot on the leaderboard, but it was also the second-lowest score on day one, after Maart’s 64. Other than the unwanted triple-bogey he made on the par-three 15th, Rose was just as solid on Tuesday.

Joe Sullivan, who leads the current Order of Merit standings, Jason Froneman and Leon Visser share the third spot on three-under.

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

(Supersport)



▲ Golfer Mark Maart.



# Cincinnati washout leaves Zverev, Pegula stranded mid-match

CARLOS Alcaraz beat the heat and humidity of a Midwest summer as the world No 2 advanced to the fourth round of the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Open on Tuesday.

The Spaniard moved through hours before an evening rainstorms and lightning spoiled the night-time scenario, leaving men's and women's third seeds stranded in third round matches.

Alexander Zverev was set to serve for the match against Brandon Nakashima, leading the American 6-4, 5-4 when the match was forced off court by the threat of lightning..

It was a similar situation for American Jessica Pegula, fighting back against Pole Magda Linette who won the first set 7-6 (7/5), before last year's finalist claimed the second 6-3.

Toronto champion Ben Shelton never got on court against Roberto Bautista Agut due to rainstorm conditions that forced officials to call it a night early.

Second seed Alcaraz kept his exposure to a minimum in 32 Celsius conditions, taking an efficient 95 minutes to dispatch Serb Hamad Medjedovic 6-4, 6-4, for his 50th match win of the year.

"Medjedovic doesn't like to run that much, so I tried to move him around as much as possible," Alcaraz said. "But it was difficult with the ball flying so much and his shots coming so fast. I tried to defend in a good way."

Alcaraz has been on a tear in 2025 as he chases Jannik Sinner in the ATP rankings, and now owns 13 straight victories at the



▲ Tennis player Carlos Alcaraz. Masters 1000 level.

He will play for the quarterfinals against Luca Nardi after the Italian defeated Jakob Mensik 6-2, 2-1 with the Czech retiring after 42 minutes.

Five-time Grand Slam winner Alcaraz, who is preparing for the approaching US Open start, added: "I was really happy to get the win in a very difficult match."

"The season is very long and in at least half of your matches you don't feel that good (physically)."

"But you have to stay positive and play

your best tennis on the day. I'm proud about that. It's a goal of the season."

Toronto finalist Karen Khachanov, earned a 6-3, 6-3 win over Jenson Brooksby.

Francisco Comesano and Reilly Opelka both felt the heat of their mid-day match, which was interrupted for 45 minutes by rain, as the Argentine limped to a 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 7-5 win while saving three match points.

Comesano needed a medical time out midway through the second set, but came back out to continue what turned into a fight of nearly three hours against the American.

Opelka called for the doctor just moments from his eventual loss, complaining of dizziness and high blood pressure after being broken for 5-6 in the final set.

After a quick consultation at his chair, Opelka was back on court to weakly scoop a return into the net on his opponent's second match point.

The 71st-ranked South American will face ninth seed Andrey Rublev, who beat Australian Alexei Popyrin 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/5), 7-5.

Opelka, noted for his big serve, fired 27 aces but also committed nearly 60 unforced errors. Comesano broke on four of his 13 chances.

He is the first Argentine into the Cincy round of 16 since Diego Schwartzman in 2022.

## GAUFF WINS BY WALKOVER

In the WTA draw, second seed Coco Gauff eased into the fourth round when opponent Dayana Yastremska withdrew before their Tuesday match.

The American, who won the 2023 Cincinnati title and followed up with a US Open crown, will await an opponent from former Roland Garros champion Jelena Ostapenko and Italian Lucia Bronzetti.

Yastremska was unable to play due to illness, the WTA said.

Seventh seed Jasmine Paolini, last season's Roland Garros and Wimbledon finalist, defeated American Ashlyn Krueger 7-6, (7/2), 6-1 while German qualifier Ella Seidel continued her strong showing with a 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (8/6) defeat of McCartney Kessler.

(Supersport)

## A biltong-loving Mexican pro in Parys

A Mexican professional golfer who is mad about South African biltong, has fallen in love with this country, and is teeing it up in Parys this week. That's Parys in the Free State.

Luis Carrera is looking to continue his so far highly successful debut season on the Sunshine Tour in this week's Vodacom Origins of Golf Series at the Parys Golf & Country Estate.

The 25-year-old Carrera made a spectacular debut when he became the first player in Sunshine Tour history to win the Tour's Qualifying School and then the first two tournaments of the season in the FBC Zim Open and the Kit Kat Cash & Carry Pro-Am.

He is currently the leader on both the Tour's Courier Guy Order of Merit and Fortress Rookie of the Year standings.

Now he will tee it up in the Sunshine Tour's most historic series of pro-am tournaments – the Vodacom Origins of Golf.

And a bit of research will tell him that this series, which dates back to 2004, has produced champions who have gone on to global success and even Major glory.

But the only reason Carrera is even in Parys this week is because of a plan he and a few Colombian golf friends had.

"I had a couple of friends from Colombia who were going to come to the Sunshine Tour Qualifying School in April this year. We decided on the



▲ Golfer Luis Carrera

Sunshine Tour because it gives you something more and you can jump to another level like the HotelPlanner Tour, DP World Tour and even the PGA Tour. It also has a lot of tournaments so you get into the rhythm of playing the whole year, and the prize money is very good too," says Carrera.

In the end, his Colombian friends didn't make it. "So I came alone. I was a bit nervous about that, but it seems to have worked out well."

## DREAMING BIG

Carrera was born and raised in Mexico, and was introduced to the game by his father at the age of three.

At the age of 18 he left to play college golf in the United States, and in 2022 won the Canadian Amateur.

He turned professional in June 2023, and until recently was self-

coached.

Now he's chasing a third title on the Sunshine Tour and a place in the history of the Vodacom Origins of Golf.

"I think it's wonderful here. I like the nature. At one of the tournaments we saw monkeys on the course – that was unreal. I was so impressed by the wildlife. I also love the biltong. And the South African players are super nice to me," he says.

It's now August and if Carrera continues in this form, he'll be perfectly placed for when the Sunshine Tour's co-sanctioned season rolls around with the DP World Tour and HotelPlanner Tour events from the end of this year.

(Supersport)

## Romero replaces Son as Spurs captain

CRISTIAN Romero has been named as Tottenham's new captain after the departure of club legend Son Heung-min.

Son, who had worn the armband for the last two seasons and lifted the Europa League in May as Spurs ended their 17-year wait for a trophy, joined LAFC earlier this month.

Romero had acted as vice-captain for the previous two years and started the Europa League final win over Manchester United as skipper before Son came off the bench in the second half.

The 27-year-old Argentine will lead his side out when Tottenham take on European champions Paris Saint-Germain in the Uefa Super Cup on

Wednesday.

"I had a good conversation with Cuti Romero and he's going to be our captain," new Tottenham manager Thomas Frank told the official club website.

"He was very honoured and very happy about it. It's a big thing and should be to lead this wonderful club out on the pitch, not just for this Super Cup, but also throughout the season."

"I think he has all the right qualities. He leads from his behaviour on the pitch, driving the team forward in every way and outside the pitch he's always pushing the team."

Romero, who joined Spurs from Atalanta four years ago, (Supersport)



▲ Cristian Romero.





▲ Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani shaking with Region V CEO Stanley Mutoya.



▲ Basketball teams in action.

# BASE to roll out Region V equipment

By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

**BASKETBALL** players will have a feel of the equipment donated to the country by the Region V African Union Sports Council.

This was revealed by Basketball Eswatini

President Clement Dlamini following the donation that was delivered by the regional body Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Stanley Mutoya to the Minister of sports, culture, and youth affairs Bongani Nzima on Monday.

The equipment's consists of a 3-on-3 basketball floor and 290 basketballs.

"We are grateful for the donation from Region V, and it will play a major role in the

development of the sport in the country. We will use the floors in all our courts during our competitions and will reveal further details once we receive the consignment," he said.

Mutoya said the donation was part of their commitment to uplift sports in the region.

"We are pleased to announce the donation of the equipment to Eswatini, which will be

delivered in due course. We are pleased with the progress made by Sporting in the various sporting codes," he said. Minister Nzima thanked the regional body for its continuous support. "We are grateful for the support from Region v, which plays a key role in the development of sports in the country and regionally," he said.

# Big guns face off in Sphana teams E10k Knockout

By Chris Dlamini

**A fierce draw it is!**

Gigantic fixtures are underway in the upcoming Sphana Investments Manzini/Matsapha Zonal League Pool Teams Knockout Tournament.

Four of the giant teams in the league could not avoid each other when the draw was held on Tuesday at Give Thanks Pool Room in Matsapha.

With the two-weekend tournament starting on Saturday, August 16 at MPC and Matsapha Police Academy, giants MPC will start with a clash against big-time rivals, Ludzeludze Lions at noon. MPC will have a home advantage in this match. Interestingly, the winner here will go on to play ERS A in the quarterfinals at 2pm in the same venue.

Meanwhile, a star-studded Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) Pool Team, got a bye to the quarterfinals where they will take on a tough Give Thanks who beat them in their last league meeting. This matchup is scheduled for 4pm at MPC.

Other games will be played at Matsapha Police Academy at 10am and noon.

Each team is to part with E300



▲ Matsapha Police Academy pool club.

for registration to the tournament. Payment can be done through league Treasurer Dumisani 'Din-ho' Malindzisa at his number 7674 4049, including withdrawal costs for those using MoMo. The grand prize is E5 000, with the finals set for next weekend.

**Prize Breakdown:**

1. Champions - E5 000
2. Runners-up - E3 000
3. 3rd Place - E1 000
4. 4th Place - E1 000

**The draw:**

**Saturday, August 16, 2025**

**Matsapha Police Academy (Last 16):**

REPS Masters vs. Zakhele Potters 10am

Correctional vs. Manzini Masters Noon

**Manzini Pool Club (Last 16):**

MPC vs. Ludzeludze Lions Noon

**Matsapha Police Academy (Last 8):**

Ludzeludze Tigers vs. Correction-

al/Manzini Masters 2pm

ERS B vs. REPS Masters/Zakhele Potters 4pm

**Manzini Pool Club (Last 8):**

ERS A vs. MPC/Ludzeludze Lions 2pm

Give Thanks vs. REPS 4pm.



# Barbosa joins Stumbo XI



▲Amando Barbosa.

By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

RENOWNED bodybuilder Amando Barbosa has ventured into football.

The Mozambique born sportsman has joined National First Rookies Stumbo XI as physical and condition coach ahead of the 2025/26 season.

Babosa was confirmed by the club’s Public Relations Officer (PRO), Guy Magongo.

“We are pleased to welcome Babosa into the club and confident he will add value to the team,” he said.

Magongo recently joined the Malkerns-based side from Ezulwini United.

He thanked the Stumbo XI family for trusting him with the job.

“I am honoured with the responsibility that has been bestowed on me. I will work with the entire Stumbo XI family in transforming the team,” he said.

Magongo previously worked for former premier league side Mbabane Midas City.



▲Siyakha Under 13 champions Young Reds.

## Brave Lions, Young Reds clinch RES Siyakha Juniors League championship

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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BRAVE Lions Football Club development teams, Brave Lions Under 15s, and Young Reds Under 13s were crowned champions of the RES Siyakha 1800 Mafucula Juniors Leagues, as the curtains fell in the 2024/25 campaign over the weekend.

The Brave Lions U15 team finished with 38

points, 11 more than the runners-up. With 52 goals, the Vuvulane side defended their title in style.

In the under 13 league, Young Reds, sister team to the U15 champions, finished with 36 points, 10 ahead of Equator. In 14 games, Young Reds won 12 and scored 36 goals.

Interestingly, both teams are coached by the ever-passionate Sipho ‘Mdamara’ Magagula who has been hailed as a loyal servant of the game, having nurtured many talents who went on to leave a mark in the senior team.

By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

SIPHO ‘Mdamara’ Magagula, the coach who led Brave Lions U15 and Young Reds U13 teams to RES Siyakha 1800 Juniors Leagues championship, believes that hard work paid the price for their success.

In a post-match interview, Magagula highlighted many key areas that he believes played a key role, and these include nurturing the talent to become the best as well as giving every child the opportunity to play.

“First and foremost, let me take this opportunity to thank RES Siyakha for providing us with equipment to ensure that the children play. I am happy that we have won the championship, and it was not easy; we had to work hard. Special thanks to the parents and/or guardians who trusted us with their children and allowed them to play. Indeed, the children are in safe hands, and they are always hungry to play football. I’m happy that every child got the opportunity to play and there were no injuries recorded,” he said.

Asked on what inspires him to concentrate on development, Magagula revealed that he had long developed the passion to nurture young talent, and he boasts having produced

## We worked very hard — Mdamara



▲Siyakha Under 15 champions Vuvulane Brave Lions.

about 90 per cent of the Brave Lions seniors team players.

“Actually, I am always with the children, I love them, and they love me. I’m like a father to them. I derive pleasure in producing the

best, and I have been doing that for quite some time. And I am glad that I also did coaching training for kids where we were imparted with the relevant skills to nurture the talent,” he added.



▲Development coach Sipho ‘Mdamara’ Magagula.



By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

MBABANE Highlanders’ Patrons have thrown full support behind the club’s new President, Shauwn Mkhize.

The capital city giants’ veteran, through their Chairman Thembinkosi Mamba, says the South African businesswoman can run the club.

This is contained in the answering affidavits in their ownership battle at the High Court against estranged Boss Bheki ‘Rubber’ Simelane.

Simelane is demanding his reinstatement as Highlanders President following the recent termination of his 18 months contract through SM Jele Attorneys.

“The second respondent can fulfill all the obligations under the contract, including the remuneration of players. A court may not grant the remedy of specific performance if it will give rise to hardship. The applicant failed to pay the salaries of the football players and technical staff,” Mamba said.

The Chairman of the Patrons further

averred that the reinstatement of Simelane could cause hardships to players and Coaches.

“To require that the team be returned to the applicant would create undue hardship, particularly in respect of issues such as welfare, numeration, and welfare,” Mamba said.

The Patrons are represented by Emmanuel Shabangu from Robinson & Betrams Attorneys.

Mkhize is cited as the second respondent on the matter, with the Premier League of Eswatini and Eswatini Football Association cited as fourth and fifth respondents on the matter.

The matter was postponed to August 21, 2025, by Judge Titus Mlangeni.



▲Mbabane Highlanders club president Shauwn Mkhize enjoys a light moment.

# We don’t belong to Gamedze family — ‘Birds’ Ngwenya

## ... Swallows FC president Absalom Ngwenya says the late Victor Gamedze formed Swallows Pty to raise capital for Mbabane Swallows FC.

By Chris Dlamini

AS the raging ownership wrangle unfolds, Mbabane Swallows FC has come out to say the club does not belong to the Gamedzes.



▲Swallows president Absalom Ngwenya.

holds the team’s shares worth millions from their 2017 and 2018 CAF Confederation Cup and CAF Champions League group stage successes, which Princess Lungile, Gamedze’s widow, is reported to have since transferred to the club’s supporters who had a meeting stopped by the police last Sunday in Malkerns.

Meanwhile, Ngwenya also touched on the supporters’ meeting issue and clarified when and how such meetings can take place.

His statement indicated that mass supporters’ meetings are rare at Swallows, with the last one taking place in 2012. He articulated that only the Chairman of the National Supporters Committee (NSC) of the club can convene their meeting as and when necessary or deemed fit.

“Branch Chairpersons have the right to convene meetings at their branch level. Any other activity or meeting which shall involve more than one branch, must be sanctioned by the NSC through their Chairman or delegate,” further stated Ngwenya in the statement.

He also claimed they had tried several times to meet with Swallows Pty but the latter always ducked the meetings in the last minute, which has made it difficult for the two to align.



▲Mike Mohammed.

# Mike Mohammed joins Royal Leopard

By Chris Dlamini

FORMER Mbabane Swallows forward Mike Mohammed is back in Eswatini football.

After leaving Swallows in 2015 for South Africa’s (SA) money-spinning Premier Soccer League (PSL), joining Maritzburg United, he has since signed for the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup 2025/26-bound police outfit, Royal Leopard.

“He is with us and officially our new signing ahead of the new season. Most know him very well as he played in Eswatini before,” said Leopard’s Public Relations Officer (PRO) Frank Hurube.

The spokesperson said Mohammed would not be the only incoming for them as they

also had the Confederation Cup coming up mid-next month.

“We released our Mali players after their contracts had run out. We’ll now be looking at domestic players who can add value to the squad,” said Hurube.

Meanwhile, Mohammed had been linked with a return to Swallows a few seasons back but nothing materialised as he reverted to SA.

The Ghanaian forward had stints with Betway Premiership sides TS Galaxy and Polokwane City in his career.

He will now lead the Leopard front line domestically and internationally.

Leopard will first play officially in the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025 which resumes on August 30 until September 7, before taking on Namibia’s Young Africans on September 19 away for the first legs of the Confederation Cup preliminary round.





# Washout leaves Zverev, Pegula stranded

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# We don't belong to Gamedze family – 'Birds' Ngwenya



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# MaMkhize can run Highlanders – Patrons

● Mbabane Highlanders Patrons throw full weight behind new President, SA businesswoman Shauwn ‘MaMkhize’ Mkhize in court answering affidavit, saying she can fulfil all obligations under the new contract. **Page 23**