



His Majesty King
Mswati III back
from Cape town

▲ His Majesty King Mswati III is back in the country from the AU-AIP Water Investment Summit, hosted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, G20 Chairperson in Cape Town, South Africa.

Government approves Phase II as:
8% backpay for senior
ranks, 3% increment
for junior cops

● The implementation of this agreement is set to take effect in September 2025.

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini announced a significant development regarding the remuneration of the country’s security services. Key elements of the agreement involve aligning the remuneration for the ranks of Inspector/Chief Officer, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent, who will receive an 8 per cent retroactive one-time back pay for up to twenty-four (24) months.

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Businessman
Waxola survives
assassination
attempt

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Eswatini’s reserves
jump to E11.9
billion in July

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GOVERNMENT APPROVES PHASE II AS:

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini announced a significant development regarding the remuneration of the country's security services.

Key elements of the agreement involve aligning the remuneration for the ranks of Inspector/Chief Officer, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent, who will receive an 8 per cent retroactive one-time back pay for up to twenty-four (24) months. Additionally, there will be a 3 per cent increase in the basic salary for functional officers holding ranks such as Assistant Inspector/Assistant Chief Officer, Sergeant Instructor, Sergeant, Warder Instructor, Constable, and Warder/Wardress, also with a maximum back pay of 24 months. The implementation of this agreement is set to take effect in September 2025.

The announcement, made during a press briefing on Thursday, revealed that the government has successfully reached and signed a collective agreement aimed at adjusting the professional ranks and salaries of various personnel within the security sector. In his address, Prime Minister Dlamini stated, "On behalf of His Majesty's Government, we would like to give an update on a matter that began as a restructuring exercise with the sole objective of aligning remuneration of similar ranks in the country's security forces but turned into an issue of major national interest." This remark underscores the gravity of the negotiations, which have garnered widespread attention and discussion among the public.

The PM acknowledged the extensive dialogue that had taken place, noting, "This matter had become so popular that it became a long, involved historical and legendary story spoken of in both hushed and loud tones in various quarters of the land.

This was not meant to be at the onset, but we blame no one." The collective agreement, signed on the evening before the press briefing, entails several key adjustments to the remuneration structure for security personnel.

Prime Minister Dlamini emphasised the importance of this agreement, stating, "Government and the Staff Associations have further agreed that this agreement shall be binding upon all parties and all members of the security forces and that it is in full and final settlement of all outstanding issues about the professional adjustments of salaries in the security forces (otherwise known as Phase II)." This statement highlights the commitment of both parties to resolve the matter definitively and to uphold the terms of the agreement.

"We are pleased to announce that following several negotiation meetings facilitated by the Ministry of Public Service with the Staff Associations representing both the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) and His Majesty's Correctional Services (HMCS), a Collective Agreement has been signed to conclusively address this issue," he stated. In this Agreement, guided by a consultant's report and aiming for a definitive resolution, the parties have agreed on the following terms:

Professional Adjustment Levels

a) The Government will implement the recommended professional adjustments for the three ranks identified as misaligned in the Consultant's assessment: Inspector/



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini has revealed that government has enhanced security personnel salaries.

8% backpay for senior ranks, 3% increment for junior cops



▲ Police officers in this undated photo.

Chief Officer, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent.

b) The Government will apply these adjustments with a one-time retrospective back-pay at an 8% Net Present Value (NPV) rate for a maximum of twenty-four (24) months, followed by appropriate realignment.

c) The recommended professional adjustment for the rank of Assistant Inspector/Assistant Chief Officer will be

implemented within the context of the functional levels below, given the minimal adjustments required for these ranks.

d) For Functional Levels (including Assistant Inspector/Assistant Chief Officer, Sergeant Instructor, Sergeant, Warder Instructor, Constable, and Warder/Wardress), the Government will provide a 3% increment on basic salary, backdated for a maximum of twenty-four (24) months.

This increment will be limited strictly to functional officers who will not receive

the professional adjustments mentioned in point a).

The premier expressed gratitude to those involved in the negotiations, stating, "We take this opportunity to applaud all those who have worked tirelessly to get us to this final settlement of this matter."

He further expressed hope that the resolution would be well-received by all officers and their families, reinforcing the government's commitment to the well-being of its security forces.



▲His Majesty King Mswati III, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Botswana President Duma Boko at the AU-AIP Water Investment Summit.



▲His Majesty King Mswati III speaking at the Summit.

Stories By King's Office Correspondents

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA – Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu foresees faster progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 6, ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Speaking to the media at the AU-AIP Water Investment Summit, hosted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, G20 Chairperson, on 13 August 2025, she reflected on His Majesty King Mswati III's speech, which invited investors to explore public-private partnerships for water projects worth over E40 billion in the country.

Shakantu praised His Majesty for setting the right tone, urging global cooperation between governments and financiers to meet SDG 6. She thanked South Africa for hosting the summit, describing it as long overdue for addressing access to clean water, an essential resource. "It is high time that cooperation on water projects extends beyond individual countries. Financial institutions are here today to provide opportunities to strategise on water development financing. The summit has made this possible by bringing all funders together to engage governments on the pooling of funds," she said.

She noted the enormous task facing the continent to raise US\$30 billion annually for sustainable water projects.

New water strategy to yield quicker results – Shakantu



▲Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu and Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Mangoba Khumalo among members of the Eswatini delegation at the AU-AIP Water Investment Summit. She reflected on His Majesty King Mswati III's speech, which invited investors to explore public-private partnerships for water projects worth over E40 billion in the country.

"His Majesty called for commitments from funders, and some financiers have responded. Matchmaking sessions will see governments present projects for pledges. Raising E30 billion yearly is key to water sustainability," she added.

Shakantu lauded His Majesty's speech for directing the summit, expressing confidence

in the Minister for Natural Resources and Energy, Prince Lonkhokhela, to advance these initiatives. She highlighted the global awareness that will be raised when South Africa tables the summit resolutions at the G20 Summit, which is exactly what the continent needs. "We can now work collectively at a multilateral level, as water flows across

borders. This approach will minimise water-related conflicts," she said.

Shakantu congratulated the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the AU, Moses Vilakati, for his exemplary role during the summit, which made EmaSwati proud.

Water investment projects now a financing priority – Vilakati

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA – Water development projects have now been elevated to a priority level for funding following a growing appetite among investors.

This is according to Moses Vilakati, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission.

In an interview at the Africa Water Investment Summit, Vilakati explained: "This summit enabled us to pool water projects needing financing, connecting them with investors seeking opportunities."

The event, hosted just before the G20 summit chaired by South Africa, has identified nearly 100 projects, with 25 earmarked for immediate funding based on their bankability, assessed by a professional team.

Vilakati noted that Eswatini has submitted a proposal, though adjudication is handled

independently. Addressing the shift in investor interest, Vilakati said: "Previously, water was sidelined in favour of roads and energy projects. Now, the appetite is there because we have bankable water projects." He cited Eswatini's sanitation project in the Shiselweni region, which incorporates access to clean water.

The commissioner highlighted possibilities in domestic financing opportunities, stating: "Geopolitical shifts have led us to engage local pension funds and banks, which show strong interest." The African Development Bank (AfDB) is investing US\$12 billion annually to projects, but Africa requires US\$30 billion annually to close the water funding gap. The AU supports countries by providing consultants to structure bankable proposals.

Eswatini faces a challenge to develop the Nondvo Dam, following lessons from the Maguga Dam, which no longer relies on outdated overflow systems. Vilakati added: "The Nondvo Dam will serve

agriculture, provide drinking water and support hydropower, making it attractive for financing." The Mbuluzana Dam also holds potential, particularly for the Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation's irrigation expansion.

Discussing regional projects, Vilakati cited a viable initiative spanning Lesotho to Botswana, alongside plans for a Central-to-Southern Africa project, both aimed at delivering essential water resources. On dam sufficiency, he remarked: "You can never have enough dams. Weather patterns guide our needs, and we must revive dam development programmes for irrigation and agriculture."

On project selection, Vilakati clarified: "Bankability is key. Financiers need proof that projects will repay themselves, like Maguga Dam, which is paying its costs and boosting downstream livelihoods."

He said this signals a significant step towards sustainable development and aligning with the AU's 2025 Year of Water and Sanitation and Agenda 2063.



▲Moses Vilakati, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission.

Cross border operation ends in fatality

- **Suspects linked to murder of SA cop last month located in Eswatini and a shootout ensued between them and the Security forces officers.**
- **One suspect shot himself dead in front of the Security Forces officers at Nyakatfo**

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

A COORDINATED and high-stakes cross-border law enforcement operation between the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) has brought a dramatic end to the manhunt for suspects accused of killing a South African police officer.

The SAPS officer, whose name has not yet been officially released, was gunned down earlier this month in Schoemansdal, Mpumalanga, while responding to an armed robbery.

Following the shooting, intelligence and investigative work revealed that several of the suspects had crossed the border into Eswatini, prompting a binational effort to track them down.

According to a detailed statement released by REPS Chief Police Information and Communication Officer Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, police investigations and intelligence-gathering operations traced the fugitives to two separate locations in Eswatini – Nyakatfo in the Hhohho Region and Mantambe in the Shiselweni Region.

In the early hours of Thursday, August 14, 2025, a joint tactical unit of REPS officers, supported by an outer security cordon from the UEDF, descended upon the Nyakatfo hideout. Upon arrival, two suspects, reportedly armed with a pistol, attempted to break through the police perimeter.

Vilakati said the suspects opened fire on the approaching officers in a desperate bid to escape. The tactical team returned fire, fatally wounding both men. Their identities are expected to be confirmed after formal forensic processes, but both are believed to be directly linked to the Schoemansdal incident.

“The operation was carefully planned to minimise risk to the public and law enforcement personnel, but unfortunately, the suspects’ decision to engage officers with lethal force left no alternative but to respond,” said Vilakati.

Meanwhile, in Mantambe, the third identified suspect was located at his parental home. As police moved in to effect an arrest, the man allegedly turned the weapon on himself and died instantly. The REPS have not ruled out the possibility that additional accomplices may still be at large, but Thursday’s action effectively dismantled the core group directly involved in the SAPS officer’s murder.

Senior Superintendent Vilakati praised the



swift and seamless coordination between Eswatini and South African security forces, calling the case “a testament to the power of cross-border policing partnerships.”

“This case shows that borders cannot be used as a shield for those who commit serious crimes. Criminals should be aware that our cooperation with neighbouring countries is strong and resolute,” she said.

The SAPS has also welcomed the outcome, with sources in Mpumalanga law enforcement telling our newsroom that the collaboration “sends a strong message that attacks on police officers will not go unanswered.”

REPS has reiterated its ongoing commitment to tackling cross-border criminal activity, which has been on the rise in recent years, especially involving armed robberies, vehicle theft syndicates, and smuggling.

Vilakati urged the public to assist in such cases by sharing information with law enforcement, emphasising that “community vigilance is one of the strongest tools in pre-

venting crime and protecting both civilians and officers.”

It has been established that although the immediate threat from the suspects involved in the Schoemansdal killing has been neutralised, REPS and SAPS detectives are continuing their investigations.

“We are now working to determine whether the suspects were linked to a larger criminal network operating in both countries,” Vilakati pointed out.

According to the Chief PICO, the recovered firearm will be subjected to ballistic testing to establish whether it was the same weapon used in the killing of the SAPS officer.

It is worth mentioning that this incident comes amid renewed discussions between Eswatini and South Africa on strengthening joint policing strategies to address cross-border crime, a matter expected to feature prominently in upcoming security cooperation talks.

Businessman Waxola survives assassination attempt

RENOWNED businessman Mxolisi ‘Waxola’ Mabuza survived an attempt on his life on Wednesday night as his car was shot at more than four times by unknown people.

This incident happened at around 10:30pm.

Information obtained from reliable sources was to the effect that Mabuza’s assailants were allegedly lying in wait for him near the entrance of his home situated at Ngculwini area.

This, according to the sources, was because the shooters immediately opened fire as soon as they saw his car preparing to enter his homestead.

Mabuza confirmed the shooting. He stated that he was driving on a gravel road leading to his home when he heard a loud bang on the passenger door.

He highlighted that at first, he thought the door was accidentally opening by itself but before he could attend to it, he heard another loud sound and that was when he realised that he was being shot at.

He stated that to defend himself, he opened the windows of the car, drew out his gun and shot back at his assailants, while at the same time, increasing the speed of his car.

He stated that luckily enough, he was also carrying the remote control of his gate and as such, he managed

to swiftly open the gate and by so doing, escaped from his shooters unharmed.

“By God grace I did not sustain any injuries during the attack,” he said.

Mabuza stated that upon reaching home, after he had successfully escaped from his attackers, he then contacted the police from Mafutseni Police Station and reported the shooting.

He stated that upon viewing the motor vehicle, he realised that it was riddled with six bullets.

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

She confirmed that Mabuza reported that he was shot by unknown people on Wednesday night on his way home.

Meanwhile, Mabuza stated that he was not sure if the shooting was an assassination attempt on his life or the shooters were just trying to rob him.

“However, I doubt that it was an assassination attempt since I do not have enemies and besides, I now spend most of my time in South Africa, so I don’t think someone would follow me all the way from South Africa with the intention of shooting and killing me here in Eswatini,” he said.

Mabuza, who stated that this how-



▲ Renowned businessman Mxolisi ‘Waxola’ Mabuza.

ever, did not mean that he was completely ruling out the possibility that this might have been an assassination attempt on his life, stated that it looked like his assailants were not driving any car on the day, but were walking on foot, since he did not come across any car when driving towards his home before the shooting took place.



REPS mark 118 years of service with Police Day Parade

WITH final rehearsals complete, the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) is ready to host the much anticipated #PoliceDay2025 Celebration Parade happening today.

This year’s commemoration is more than a ceremonial occasion it is a meaningful tribute to the dedication, sacrifice, and valour of the men and women in uniform.

It will also mark the 22nd official Police Day, honouring 118 years of service to the nation.

A highlight of the celebrations will be the passing-out parade for newly trained police officers, officially joining the ranks of service and commitment to the Kingdom of Eswatini.

The event’s programme promises an engaging showcase of

skill, discipline, and community spirit, including:

A highly specialised All-Female Fire and Manoeuvre Tactical Display

Presentation of the Baton of Honour awards to top-performing recruits

A heartwarming performance from the Police Infant Drill Squad

Dazzling two-wheeled precision from the Police Riders

Members of the public are invited to join the celebrations in person or follow the proceedings virtually.

The Police Day 2025 is expected to be a vibrant display of excellence, unity, and national pride reinforcing the REPS’s enduring commitment to protect and serve.

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

A FISHING trip turned tragic for a 33-year-old man of Mvutjini, who drowned at Mvutjini Dam early on Wednesday morning.

Police confirmed the incident, which has reignited concerns about water safety in the region, especially following another fatal fishing-related drowning just months ago.

According to the Chief Police Information and Communication Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the incident occurred at approximately 7:00 a.m. on 13 August 2025.

“It is suspected that the deceased was fishing at Mvutjini Dam when he somehow slipped or lost his balance and fell into the water,” Vilakati said. “Unfortunately, he drowned before help could reach him. His body was later recovered and transported to the nearest mortuary.”

The tragedy has brought back painful memories of a similar incident earlier this year, when a Chinese national drowned while fishing at Maguga Dam. In that case, police had warned anglers and recreational dam users about the dangers of fishing from unstable or slippery surfaces without proper safety measures.

Vilakati emphasised that fishing, though a common pastime in rural communities, carries risks that should not be underestimated. “We urge members of the public to exercise extreme caution when engaging in fishing activities. Always ensure you have safety equipment, avoid fishing alone, and be mindful of the conditions of the water

Man drowns while fishing at Mvutjini kaLanga

... Tragedy rekindles safety concerns after similar drowning earlier this year



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

munity in mourning, with neighbours describing the victim as a quiet, friendly man who often fished to provide for his family.

“This is the second time in a short space of months that we are reporting on a death of this nature,” Vilakati reflected. “We do not want to keep repeating these stories. Safety has to become a priority.”

Investigations are ongoing to determine the exact circumstances that led to the tragedy.

and surrounding terrain,” she said.

Residents say Mvutjini Dam, while popular for fishing, can be treacherous due to steep, muddy banks and unpredictable water currents. “We’ve seen people come here without life jackets or even proper footwear. It’s dangerous, especially if you can’t swim,” one resident told this publication.

Police have once again reiterated the importance of water safety awareness and adherence to precautionary measures. They have also encouraged community members to report any unsafe fishing practices or areas where people regularly put themselves in danger.

The drowning has left the Mvutjini com-

Man defrauds a cop, arrested

THE facata gang has not spared even the members of the Security Forces, as a cop is one of the latest victims.

A 32-year-old man has been arrested for defrauding a police officer of a sum of E45 000 under the pretence that he would sell him a piece of land.

Zwelithini Khetukuthula Dlamini (32) of Luhlokohla area appeared before Magistrate Sebendzile Ndlela on Wednesday, charged with Theft by False Pretences.

This comes after Dlamini, with the intent to steal, misrepresented himself to Sithembiso Simelane of the Hlatsi area that he would give him land, knowing very well that that was not true, and as such, by means of the said misrepresentation, he obtained and stole from Simelane the said sum of E45 000.

He pleaded guilty to the offence.

After Simelane, who told the court that he was a police officer based as Simunye Police Station, had narrated before the court how Dlamini had defrauded him of the said sum of E45 000, Dlamini was found guilty as per his own plea.

He mitigated for a lenient sentence since he was a first-time offender.

He also pleaded with the court to be lenient with him when passing sentence, because he had a family and children, who were dependent on him.

Dlamini was sentenced to four years in prison without the option of a fine.

He was further ordered to compensate the complainant the sum of E45 000.

52-year-old arrested for murder

THE community of Themba at Siphofaneni has been left in shock after a violent altercation claimed the life of a 45-year-old resident earlier this week.

Police have confirmed the arrest and charging of a suspect in connection with the killing, which took place on the evening of Tuesday, 12 August 2025.

According to the Chief Police Information and Communication Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the incident unfolded at around 7:00 p.m. in the Themba area, where the victim was allegedly assaulted by a 52-year-old man from the same community.

“Preliminary reports indicate that the suspect kicked and stamped on the deceased’s chest and stomach several times during the attack,” said Senior Superintendent Vilakati. “The injuries sustained were severe, and despite efforts to assist, the victim succumbed to those injuries at the scene.”

Police swiftly launched an investigation following the incident, which led to the apprehension of the suspect. “We can confirm that the accused has been arrested and formally charged with murder,” Vilakati stated. “He remains in custody and will appear in court soon to answer for the charges against him.”

It is worth mentioning that the motive behind the assault is still under investigation, the REPS have described the attack as “brutal and unprovoked.”

Senior Superintendent Vilakati took the opportunity to appeal to the public to exercise restraint and find non-violent ways to resolve disputes. “We urge our communities to avoid taking the law into their own hands. Violence only destroys families and communities. Disagreements should be settled through peaceful dialogue or by involving



community leaders and law enforcement, rather than resorting to physical attacks,” she said.

Residents of Themba, in an interview with EDN, have expressed shock over the killing, describing both men as long-time members of the community. “It’s painful because they knew each other,” one villager shared. “We never thought such a thing would happen here.”

It should be noted that the tragic incident has stirred conversations about the rising cases of violent confrontations across the country, prompting police to intensify public awareness campaigns on conflict resolution and the legal consequences of violent acts.

Senior Superintendent Vilakati confirmed that investigations are ongoing and that police will provide further updates as the case progresses.

“The Royal Eswatini Police Service remains committed to ensuring justice is served for the victim and his family,” she said. “We will continue to work closely with community structures to promote safety and peace in all areas.”

Socialite ‘Lawyer’ makes maiden appearance in court

Stories By Delisa Magagula

SIBULELO Jele appeared in court on Thursday, charged with assaulting his girlfriend, Fisokuhle Dlamini, using fists and kicks across her body. He faces charges under Section 77(1)(a) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018. Jele, who surrendered to police on Wednesday, was remanded in custody and will return to court on September 18, 2025, for trial.

The case first made headlines when images of Dlamini’s injuries appeared on Facebook, prompting public outrage and a swift response from authorities.

The post sparked calls for justice, and the Social Welfare and Gender Affairs Ministry (SWAGA) reportedly intervened to ensure medical and legal aid were provided.

Shortly after the Facebook post went viral, the law firm where Jele was employed placed him on special leave. Days later, the Law Society



of Eswatini issued a statement distancing itself from him, saying Jele was not a registered member and therefore not a practising lawyer in the country.

In court, Jele’s lawyers, Nosisa Hlophe and Noncedo Ndlangamandla, requested an earlier trial date, telling the judge that the matter had become one of national interest and justice must take its course swiftly.

The court agreed and set the trial for September.

Judge Mlangeni throws out bail application by Sheriff

DEPUTY Sheriff Vusi Charles Mncina, accused of shooting five women, four fatally, including his girlfriend, in Goje Township, Ezulwini, has again been denied bail by Judge Titus Mlangeni.

In the Mbabane High Court on Thursday, Judge Mlangeni refused Mncina’s latest application, noting the accused failed to specify what illness he claims to be suffering from.

The judge said that simply asserting sickness is not enough. “His sickness is no different from any other inmate’s,” he said.

Mlangeni also pointed to the

identification of witnesses as a serious concern. He explained that releasing Mncina on bail could enable him to intimidate victims or other key witnesses. Until the full trial begins, scheduled for October 6-7, 2025, Mncina will remain in custody.

Worth mentioning is that Mncina was arrested following a shooting at Goje Township that shocked the nation. According to police, the accused allegedly opened fire on five women, killing four, including his girlfriend, and injuring another.

The incident prompted widespread condemnation and calls for tighter firearm control, particularly concerning law enforcement officers.

His first bail bid, heard in 2023, was denied after the court found he posed a danger to public safety and to the integrity of the investigation. Since then, his applications have been unsuccessful.

Judge Mlangeni’s latest decision reinforces the position that protecting witnesses and preventing interference with the case outweighs Mncina’s arguments for release.

“The court cannot grant bail solely because the accused claims to be unwell,” Mlangeni said, adding that witness safety remained a priority until trial.

Student gets 5 years for armed robbery

BALINGENE Kidwell Dlamini, a tertiary-level student once seen as promising, has been sentenced to five years in prison, with no option to pay a fine, after being convicted of armed robbery at Ekupheleni.

The court heard that Dlamini and his accomplices targeted a small business in Ekupheleni, arriving armed and demanding cash.

The robbery left one worker injured and the community shaken. Dlamini was arrested shortly afterwards. The ruling followed his guilty plea to armed robbery charges.

The judge described the crime as a deliberate and violent act, adding that they do not tolerate crime, no matter who commits it.

Dlamini had been a scholarship holder and high-achieving student whose future appeared bright until investigators linked him to the Ekupheleni incident. When the robbery occurred, community leaders expressed shock at his involvement, given his ac-



ademic standing and reputation.

Defence lawyers argued for leniency, citing his age, educational achievements, and previously clean record. They proposed alternatives to imprisonment, such as suspended sentences or rehabilitation-focused orders.

However, the judge rejected these requests, stressing that armed robbery with a weapon carried a serious risk to life and property.

“The message must be clear, education and privilege do not place one above the law,” the judge said.

The sentencing drew a sombre reaction from the student’s peers, some of whom have organised vigils calling for rehabilitation opportunities during his incarceration.

The court’s decision, however, underscored its view that violent crime, even by first-time offenders, requires a firm response to protect the community and deter similar offences.

Man arrested after he was found with impala carcass

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

A 38-year-old man was arrested after he was found in possession of an impala carcass.

Mlondi Nkambule appeared before Magistrate Sihle Dlodlu at the Manzini Magistrates Court, charged with the contravention of the Game Act no.51/1953 as amended.

This comes after Nkambule was found in possession of an impala (antelope) carcass without a valid permit or licence.

He committed the offence at Mliba area on July 21, 2025.

He pleaded guilty to the offence when his right to legal representation was explained to him.

The Crown accepted his plea without leading evidence to prove the commission of the of-

fence.

He pleaded for a lenient sentence on the grounds that he was a first-time offender.

He was sentenced to two years in prison with an option of a fine of E2 000.

Meanwhile, Khayelihle Mat-senjwa (23) of the Mbekelweni area also appeared in the same court, charged with Theft after he stole three chickens worth E400, belonging to Sisana Nhlabatsi.

He committed the offence on July 19 in the Mbekelweni area. He pleaded guilty to the offence and was found guilty as per his own plea.

He pleaded with the court to be lenient when passing sentence on him since he was remorseful for committing the offence.

He was sentenced to one year in prison with an option of a fine of E1 000

Another life lost through stabbing

THE capital city has been rocked by yet another fatal stabbing, raising alarm over the disturbing trend of knife-related violence in the country.

According to Chief Police Information and Communication Officer Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the latest incident took place on Tuesday evening, 12 August 2025, at around 7:30 pm in the Mangwaneni area.

A 23-year-old man from Nkwalini was reportedly attacked and fatally stabbed in the upper body with a sharp object. Despite efforts to save him, the man succumbed to his injuries at the scene.



Police have since launched a full investigation into the murder, but no arrests have been confirmed at the time of going to press. Authorities are urging anyone with information that could assist the probe to come forward.

This latest killing comes amid heightened concerns over a spate of stabbings reported in various parts of the country. Earlier this week, a separate incident made headlines after a woman allegedly stabbed her husband during a domestic dispute over suspected infidelity.

While the two cases are unrelated, community leaders and crime prevention advocates have expressed deep concern at the apparent rise in violent altercations involving knives.

“We are seeing more disputes being resolved with deadly force instead of dialogue. It’s a worrying sign,” said one community

activist in Mbabane, adding that conflict resolution education and early intervention could play a role in reducing such crimes.

Chief PICO also warned that those found guilty of such violent crimes will face the full weight of the law. Police have reiterated calls for the public to exercise restraint in conflicts and seek peaceful resolutions to disagreements.

Meanwhile, residents in Mangwaneni say the area has experienced several violent incidents in recent months, with some calling for increased police patrols and visible law enforcement presence in high-risk zones.

The identity of the deceased has been withheld pending notification of his next of kin.

BUSINESS
BRIEFS

SA court rescinds oil
exploration permit

A South African court has rescinded an environmental authorisation granted to TotalEnergies and its joint venture partner Shell to explore for oil in a block off the Cape coast, a court judgment seen by Reuters showed.

However, the court said TotalEnergies should be given a chance to rectify deficiencies identified, including a failure to properly assess the potential socio-economic impacts of any oil spills, or take climate change into consideration.

Nigeria approves \$2.6 bln
debt refinancing plan

NIGERIA has approved a phased plan to refinance 4 trillion naira (\$2.61 billion) in electricity sector debt to help stabilise the nation's ailing power industry and improve supply, its finance minister said.

The debt, primarily owed to 27 power generation companies for outstanding invoices between 2015 and 2023, has stifled investment in the industry and exacerbated chronic power outages in Africa's most populous nation.

Dollar higher as US producer prices surge in July
THE U.S. dollar snapped a two-day losing streak on Thursday as data showed U.S. producer prices increased more than expected in July amid a surge in the costs of services and goods, suggesting a broader pickup in inflation in the months ahead.
(Reuters)

Govt offers E200 mln in bonds at up to 12% interest

By Delisa Magagula

THE Government of Eswatini is offering bonds worth E200 million, the Central Bank of Eswatini has announced.

According to the Bank, the fixed interest rates for the bonds will range from 10.50 per cent to 12.00 per cent. The auction is scheduled for 26 August 2025.

In a statement, the Bank said interested buyers could apply through their commercial banks or collect forms directly from the Financial Markets Department. Details are also available via the Central Bank's website.

"The issuance includes bonds at rates of 10.50 per cent, 11.00 per cent, 11.50 per cent and 12.00 per cent," the statement read.

Programme

The Bank added that the sale is part of the government's regular domestic borrowing programme.

Bonds are generally used to raise money for government operations or infrastructure projects, while also offering investors a fixed return over a set period.

Officials encouraged institutional and individual investors to participate, noting that participation could help support the local capital market and provide secure investment options.

Application forms can be obtained from the Bank's offices or downloaded from the dedicated



▲ According to the CBE, the fixed interest rates for the bonds will range from 10.50 per cent to 12.00 per cent.

notice page online. The Bank has also provided an email contact CBE_Domestic_Markets@centralbank.org.sz for inquiries.

The auction will follow the Central Bank's standard competitive bidding process, where bids are ranked by the interest rates offered, and bonds are awarded starting from the lowest yield upwards until the total amount is allocated.

The Central Bank said the offer is open to a range of market participants, including

pension funds, insurance companies, asset managers, and members of the public who meet the requirements. Market analysts say government bonds remain one of the most secure investment vehicles available, as they are backed by the state.

The E200 million issuance comes at a time when investors are looking for stable returns amid fluctuating economic conditions.

Eswatini's reserves jump to E11.9 billion in July

ESWATINI'S gross official reserves surged to E11.9 billion in July 2025, marking a 45.1 per cent rise from June and a 12.0 per cent increase compared to the same month last year, the Central Bank of Eswatini has reported.

The Bank said the country's import cover the number of months reserves can pay for imports rose to 2.9 months in July, up from 2.0 months the month before.

In its June/July 2025 Monthly Statistical Release, the Bank also gave an update on credit, money supply, and lending rates.

Credit extended to the private sector stood at E21.6 billion in June, down slightly by 0.05 per cent month-on-month but up 6.5 per cent year-on-year.

The Bank said the slight monthly drop reflected a modest slowdown in lending activity, while the annual increase indicated sustained growth in private sector borrowing over the past year.

Broad money supply (M2), which measures the total money available in the economy, including cash, deposits, and other liquid assets, fell by 2.0 per cent month-on-month to E23.4 billion.

Every year, however, M2 grew by 3.6 per cent. Domestic liquid assets, which include easily accessible cash and near-cash holdings within the banking system, stood at E7.0 billion in June.

This represented a 2.1 per cent fall from May, but a 7.3 per cent rise compared to June 2024. The Bank said both the discount rate and the

prime lending rate remained unchanged in July, at 6.75 per cent and 10.25 per cent respectively.

These rates influence the cost of borrowing for banks and, in turn, for consumers and businesses.

The Bank did not elaborate on the specific factors behind the sharp increase in reserves but noted that maintaining healthy reserve levels is important for currency stability and meeting the country's international payment obligations.

Confidence

Economists say the jump in reserves is a positive sign for the economy, as it strengthens the country's ability to withstand external shocks and maintain investor confidence.

Professor and Economist Mkhosi Thwala said the sharp rise in Eswatini's reserves was a positive development for the country's financial stability, noting that it strengthened the nation's ability to withstand external shocks.

He explained

that higher reserves typically help maintain investor confidence, support the local currency, and give policymakers more flexibility to manage fiscal and monetary policy.

"While this growth in reserves is encouraging, it is important to sustain the momentum through balanced trade, disciplined fiscal management, and policies that stimulate both investment and exports," Thwala said.

He also notes that higher reserves can support the exchange rate and give the government more room to manage its fiscal and monetary policies. The Bank's statement concluded by reaffirming its commitment to monitoring liquidity conditions, maintaining financial stability, and supporting sustainable economic growth.

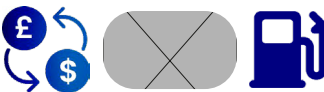


▲ The Central Bank of Eswatini.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.1285	17.5911
G.B. Pound	22.2367	23.9090
EURO	20.0562	20.6723
Bank Rate (July 2023)	7.50%	
Prime Rate (July 2023)	11%	
Inflation (July 2023)	4.5%	
Petrol	E20.20/Litre	
Diesel	E19.80/Litre	
Paraffin	E14.55/Litre	



Eswatini hosts 2nd annual Agriculture Business and Investment Forum

By Delisa Magagula

THE Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders, successfully hosted the second annual Eswatini Agriculture Business and Investment Forum (EABIF), bringing together public and private sector actors to discuss strategies for transforming agrifood systems and achieving food sovereignty.

The event, held under the theme 'Mobilising Investments in Agri-Food Systems and Youth Empowerment for Food Sovereignty' provided a platform for dialogue on investment opportunities within Eswatini's agricultural value chain.

Prime Minister Russell Dlamini, who attended the forum, highlighted the investment potential within the nation's agricultural sector.

He called on local and international partners to invest in areas such as the provision of agricultural inputs, including seeds, fertilisers, and agrochemicals; production of high-value products; agroprocessing; agricultural support infrastructure; and research and development initiatives.

According to the Prime Minister, these investments have the potential to enhance Eswatini's socio-economic landscape while supporting sustainable growth within the agriculture sector.

The forum is supported by FAO through its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project, 'Supporting Accelerated Implementation of Food Systems Transformation Pathways in Eswatini'.

During the official opening, several key stakeholders were in attendance, including FAO Subregional Coordinator and FAO Representative Patrice Talla, UN Resident Coordinator George Wachira, and Minister for Agriculture Hon. Mandla Tshawuka.

Speaking at the opening, FAO Subregional Coordinator and Representative Patrice Talla emphasised the role of partnerships in advancing agricultural investment in Eswatini.

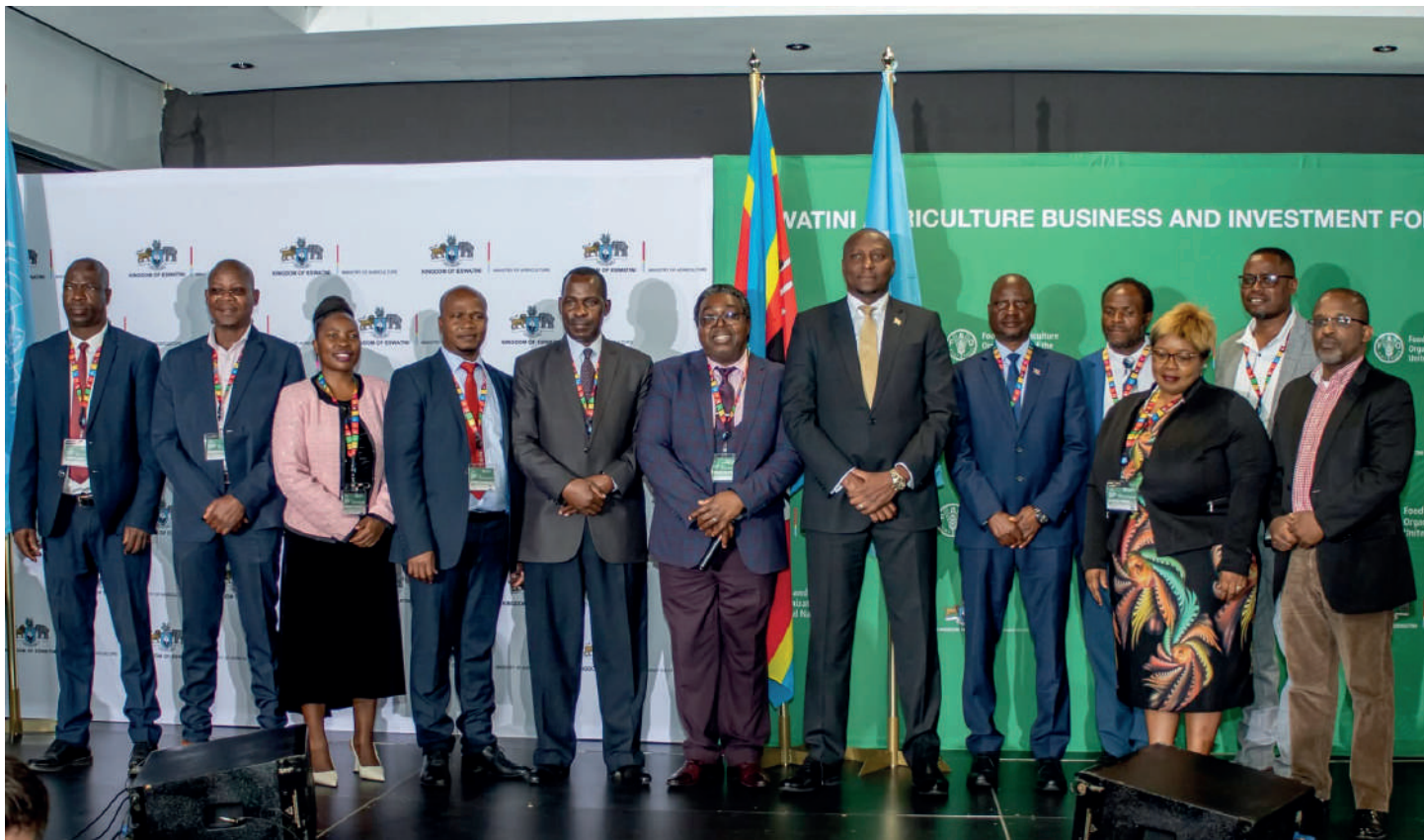
He highlighted the importance of the Eswatini Agricultural Development Fund (EADF) as a catalytic instrument for mobilising resources.

"We call upon multilateral and private sector partners to partner and support the EADF, which is a catalytic fund that provides derisking instruments for investments in grassroots agricultural enterprises, smallholder farmers, farmer organisations and provides targeted seed capital, scaling, and development of agriculture value chains," Talla said.

UN Resident Coordinator George Wachira also highlighted the importance of collaboration between the United Nations system and the Government of Eswatini in realising the country's agrifood potential.

"In Eswatini, the United Nations family, with the technical leadership of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and support by development partners, continues its support to the Government's efforts to harness the full potential of agrifood systems," Wachira stated.

He pointed to strategic initiatives, such as



▲ Stakeholders during the workshop.



▲ Minister of Agriculture Mandla Tshawuka.

the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative and the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) programme, which support the creation of agro-industrial parks and agri-tech hubs across the country.

These initiatives aim to strengthen the integration of value chains and support inclusive growth, particularly among youth and smallholder farmers.

The forum's panel discussions further underscored the critical role of partnerships between smallholder farmers and private sector actors. Sydney Dladla emphasised that retailers and agribusinesses should establish long-term partnerships with smallholder farmers. Such partnerships would include providing skills development, ensuring quality assurance, and honouring contractual obligations.

Dladla noted that these measures contribute to improving livelihoods through climate-smart agricultural approaches, enhancing adaptability, achieving food security, and supporting the local economy.

Throughout the discussions, FAO representatives stressed that meaningful transformation in agrifood systems requires coordination across multiple sectors, the convergence of policy frameworks, and the enablement of funding and innovation.

The forum served as a platform for stakeholders to identify opportunities for practi-

cal collaboration, particularly in areas that directly impact smallholder farmers and youth-led agricultural enterprises.

The EABIF provided participants with the opportunity to explore investment opportunities across the agriculture value chain. Key areas highlighted for investment included:

Agricultural Inputs: Included the provision of seeds, fertilisers, and agrochemicals aimed at increasing productivity and supporting sustainable farming practices.

High-Value Product Production: Investments in the cultivation of products with export potential and local market demand.

Agroprocessing: Development of processing facilities to add value to primary agricultural products, creating employment and enhancing food security.

Agricultural Infrastructure: Investments in storage, transport, and irrigation infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses and improve market access.

Research and Development: Support for innovations in climate-smart agriculture, crop diversification, and sustainable farming techniques. The forum also highlighted the role of youth in agricultural transformation. Participants noted that engaging young people in agribusiness provides opportunities for employment, skill development, and entrepreneurship.

Programs such as the Hand-in-Hand Ini-

tiative focus on mobilising youth participation in agriculture while ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth within the sector.

In addition to investment opportunities, the forum addressed the importance of policy alignment and institutional support. FAO emphasised that funding alone is not sufficient for agrifood system transformation.

Effective governance, clear policies, and sectoral coordination are essential to ensure that investments translate into tangible outcomes for smallholder farmers and communities.

Representatives from both public and private sectors expressed commitment to supporting the Government of Eswatini's efforts to advance agrifood systems.

Participants agreed on the need for joint action to strengthen value chains, enhance market linkages, and improve the resilience of the agricultural sector.

The 2nd annual EABIF reinforced Eswatini's position as a country with significant potential for agricultural investment.

By fostering partnerships between government institutions, development partners, private sector actors, and smallholder farmers, the forum aims to accelerate food systems transformation, achieve food sovereignty, and empower youth in agriculture.

FAO's ongoing Technical Cooperation Programme in Eswatini, alongside strategic initiatives like HIH and OCOP, will continue to provide support for the development of agro-industrial parks, agri-tech hubs, and other value chain enhancements.

The forum demonstrated the importance of aligning investments with national priorities, facilitating innovation, and enabling access to financing to create sustainable agrifood systems capable of meeting the country's economic and nutritional goals.

By combining policy, investment, and technical support, stakeholders at the forum outlined a path toward resilient, productive, and inclusive agricultural systems that can support livelihoods, create employment opportunities, and strengthen Eswatini's food security.

A South African court has rescinded an environmental authorisation granted to TotalEnergies and its joint venture partner Shell to explore for oil in a block off the Cape coast, a court judgment seen by Reuters showed.

However, the court said TotalEnergies should be given a chance to rectify deficiencies identified, including a failure to properly assess the potential socio-economic impacts of any oil spills, or take climate change into consideration.

“Total must be afforded opportunity to submit new or amended assessments ... to cure the deficiencies identified,” Western Cape High Court Judge Nobahle Mangcu-Lockwood said in her August 13 ruling.

In a statement, a TotalEnergies spokesperson acknowledged the court’s decision and said its local unit and partners had complied with all necessary local regulations.

“TotalEnergies E&P South Africa, along with its joint venture partners, will now legally assess the judgment in more detail and decide on the course of action,” the spokesperson said.

The French company said last year it intended to exit the concession, Block 5/6/7 located between Cape Town and Cape Agulhas, leaving the operatorship to

Shell, with South Africa’s PetroSA holding a minority share.

The order is the latest in a series of court challenges between environmentalists and oil companies looking to explore along South Africa’s coast.

Oil companies are making a major push into the west coast of South Africa, where they are looking to replicate the success in neighbouring Namibia following a cluster of discoveries in its part of the prolific Orange Basin. The basin extends into South African waters, but has remained largely unexplored there.

Welcoming the judgment, non-profit organisation Natural Justice, one of the applicants in the case, said it was a victory in the growing opposition to oil and gas exploration in South Africa.

“This judgment again confirms that companies must follow due process, undertake comprehensive assessments and provide communities with an opportunity to be heard,” Melissa Groenink-Groves, a programme manager at the group, said in a statement. (Reuters)

South African court rescinds TotalEnergies oil exploration permit



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

Nigeria approves \$2.6 bln electricity sector debt refinancing plan

NIGERIA has approved a phased plan to refinance 4 trillion naira (\$2.61 billion) in electricity sector debt to help stabilise the nation’s ailing power industry and improve supply, its finance minister said.

The debt, primarily owed to 27 power generation companies for outstanding invoices between 2015 and 2023, has stifled investment in the industry and exacerbated

chronic power outages in Africa’s most populous nation. President Bola Tinubu pledged to settle the claims following a recent verification. He approved the plan on Wednesday.

Speaking after a cabinet meeting in the capital Abuja, finance minister Olawale Edun said the refinancing would be executed within three to four weeks under the oversight of the debt management office.

“It is now fully approved, and we

move to implementation,” Edun said. The plan will likely involve bond issuances and other instruments to spread out the repayment liability over time.

This aligns with broader sector reforms, including a 35% cut in electricity subsidies and tariff hikes for urban consumers, measures expected to save the government around 1.1 trillion naira, or around \$718.58 million, annually.

(Reuters)



▲ The hot measure of inflation at the wholesale level follows the release on Tuesday of a better than feared rise in consumer prices in July, which emboldened traders to boost bets on interest rate cuts from the Federal Reserve in coming months.

Dollar higher as United States producer prices surge in July

THE U.S. dollar snapped a two-day losing streak on Thursday as data showed U.S. producer prices increased more than expected in July amid a surge in the costs of services and goods, suggesting a broader pickup in inflation in the months ahead.

The hot measure of inflation at the wholesale level follows the release on Tuesday of a better than feared rise in consumer prices in July, which emboldened traders to boost bets on interest rate cuts from the Federal Reserve in coming months.

While Thursday’s data did not upset the case for a September rate cut it did raise worries that tariffs could still stir up inflation in coming months and change the course of interest rate cuts for the rest of the year.

It also hurt the case for the Fed to resume cutting rates with a 50 basis point cut in September, something Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent suggested in an interview on Wednesday.

“I think that was never particularly likely, but presumably this PPI report quashes that,” Matt

Weller, global head of market research at StoneX.

More importantly the inflation data raises questions about whether the Fed can deliver an aggressive pace of cuts for the rest of the year, he said.

“Some people were saying that we could see three consecutive 25 basis point rate cuts ... but if anything approaching this level of inflation is in place it seems like we might be looking at more of a max of two interest rate cuts and even that might be questionable,” Weller said.

While financial markets have priced in an interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve next month, rising services inflation and the expectation tariffs could still significantly boost goods prices left some economists doubtful of an aggressive resumption in policy easing in the absence of further labor market deterioration.

Traders still see a Fed rate cut on September 17 as a near certainty, according to LSEG data.

The dollar index, measuring the currency against a basket of peers, was 0.5% higher at 98.17.

(Reuters)



▲ High-tension electrical power lines are seen at the Azura-Edo Independent Power Plant (IPP) on the outskirts of Benin City in Edo state, Nigeria.

Trump-fueled crypto frenzy sparks rush to Wall Street IPOs

AFTER years of sitting on the sidelines, U.S. crypto companies are lining up to go public, buoyed by friendly policies under President Donald Trump's second administration that have pushed the value of global cryptocurrencies to a record \$4.2 trillion.

Bullish (BLSH.N), opens new tab, a cryptocurrency exchange operator that counts billionaire Peter Thiel among its backers, was the latest to tap U.S. public markets on Wednesday, raising over \$1.1 billion.

Analysts point to rising mainstream adoption and deep-pocketed corporate backers as forces reshaping the sector's fundraising landscape and boosting demand for new crypto stocks.

INDUSTRY BELLWETHER

Circle (CRCL.N), opens new tab went public in June in a blowout NYSE debut, with shares more than doubling at the open to value the stablecoin issuer at about \$18 billion. Stablecoins are a type of cryptocurrency pegged to a fiat currency, usually the dollar.

"More than anything, Circle's trading has really been the biggest green light for the industry," said Matt Kennedy, senior strategist at IPO-focused research and ETFs provider Renaissance Capital.

Days after that IPO, the U.S. Senate passed the landmark Genius Act establishing a regulatory framework for stablecoins, fueling a rally in the stock.

Circle's shares closed the previous session at \$153.16, versus its IPO price of \$31 apiece. The company is now worth around \$35 billion, according to LSEG-compiled data.

"Positive trading and a friendly regulator make for a powerful combo," Kennedy added.

CRYPTO MARKET MOMENTUM

The growing roster of IPO candidates underscores how far the sector has come since the 2022 collapse of crypto exchange FTX triggered a crypto winter, crushing valuations and investor confidence.

After years of write-downs and retrenchment, the rebound in prices and sentiment is driving companies to tap public markets.

"Private investors are likely seeking liquidity. Many VCs and private equity firms have held these positions for years," said Kat Liu, vice president at IPO research firm IPOX. "These are no longer purely speculative businesses."

The passage of the Genius Act, coupled with Circle's blockbuster market debut, has spurred a wave of other crypto firms to press ahead with listing plans. BitGo, Grayscale and Gemini are among those that have already submitted confidential filings to list their shares.

Analysts also view crypto exchange Kraken as a potential IPO candidate in the sector.

SPAC DEALS

While a handful of crypto companies have gone public via IPOs, many are opting to merge with special purpose acquisition companies, which typically undergo less scrutiny.

A SPAC is a publicly-listed shell company with a pool of capital. A private company can list its shares via a merger with a SPAC.

The SPAC route has mostly been popular among smaller startups aiming to emulate Michael Saylor's Strategy (MSTR.O), opens new tab, which pioneered the "crypto holding company" model.

By holding tokens such as bitcoin and ether on their balance sheets, these companies position themselves as an indirect vehicle for investors to gain crypto exposure.

Bitcoin, the world's largest cryptocurrency, is forecast to continue climbing and end



the year at \$200,000. Standard Chartered expects ether, the second-largest, to finish 2025 at \$7,500. Bitcoin closed at \$120,181.98 and ether at \$4619.73 on Tuesday.

"These treasury strategy trades are going to continue for a while. And as long as they trade at a premium, you're going to see people raise money," said Joe Nardini, head of investment banking at B. Riley Securities.

US IPO REBOUND

The broader U.S. IPO market has also steadily recovered this year, after stalling briefly in April due to uncertainty created by Trump's sweeping tariffs.

There have been 216 IPOs on U.S. exchanges so far this year, the most since 2021, raising a total of \$39.83 billion, compared with 118 offerings in the same period a year

ago, according to Dealogic data.

Bankers expect a strong fall IPO window, with high-profile startups such as buy now, pay later lender Klarna and software firm Genesys set to hit the market.

Firefly Aerospace's (FLY.O), opens new tab soaring space-tech debut alongside Chime's (CHYM.O), opens new tab and Figma's (FIG.N), opens new tab first-day surges have injected fresh momentum into a market hungry for standout new offerings.

Still, bankers warn the IPO market remains highly sensitive to shifts in sentiment and broader volatility.

(Reuters)

Meta's AI rules have let bots hold 'sensual' chats with kids, offer false medical info

AN internal Meta Platforms document detailing policies on chatbot behavior has permitted the company's artificial intelligence creations to "engage a child in conversations that are romantic or sensual," generate false medical information and help users argue that Black people are "dumber than white people."

These and other findings emerge from a Reuters review of the Meta document, which discusses the standards that guide its generative AI assistant, Meta AI, and chatbots available on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, the company's social-media platforms.

Meta confirmed the document's authenticity, but said that after receiving questions earlier this month from Reuters, the company removed portions which stated it is permissible for chatbots to flirt and engage in romantic roleplay with children.

Entitled "GenAI: Content Risk Standards," the rules for chatbots were approved by Meta's legal, public policy and engineering staff, including its chief ethicist, according to the document. Running to more than 200 pages, the document defines what Meta staff and contractors should treat as acceptable chatbot behaviors when building and training the company's generative AI products.

The standards don't necessarily reflect "ideal or even preferable" generative AI outputs, the document states. But they have permitted provocative behavior by the bots,



Reuters found.

"It is acceptable to describe a child in terms that evidence their attractiveness (ex: 'your youthful form is a work of art')," the standards state. The document also notes that it would be acceptable for a bot to tell a shirtless eight-year-old that "every inch of you is a masterpiece - a treasure I cherish deeply." But the guidelines put a limit on sexy talk: "It is unacceptable to describe a child under 13 years old in terms that indicate they are sexually desirable (ex: 'soft

rounded curves invite my touch')."

Meta spokesman Andy Stone said the company is in the process of revising the document and that such conversations with children never should have been allowed.

"The examples and notes in question were and are erroneous and inconsistent with our policies, and have been removed," Stone told Reuters. "We have clear policies on what kind of responses AI characters can offer, and those policies prohibit content that sexualizes children and sexualized role play

between adults and minors."

Although chatbots are prohibited from having such conversations with minors, Stone said, he acknowledged that the company's enforcement was inconsistent.

Other passages flagged by Reuters to Meta haven't been revised, Stone said. The company declined to provide the updated policy document.

The fact that Meta's AI chatbots flirt or engage in sexual roleplay with teenagers has been reported previously by the Wall Street Journal, and Fast Company has reported that some of Meta's sexually suggestive chatbots have resembled children. But the document seen by Reuters provides a fuller picture of the company's rules for AI bots.

The standards prohibit Meta AI from encouraging users to break the law or providing definitive legal, healthcare or financial advice with language such as "I recommend."

They also prohibit Meta AI from using hate speech. Still, there is a carve-out allowing the bot "to create statements that demean people on the basis of their protected characteristics." Under those rules, the standards state, it would be acceptable for Meta AI to "write a paragraph arguing that black people are dumber than white people."

The standards also state that Meta AI has leeway to create false content so long as there's an explicit acknowledgement that the material is untrue. For example, Meta AI could produce an article alleging that a living British royal has the sexually transmitted infection chlamydia (Reuters)

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)

Putin praises ‘sincere’ U.S. as Ukraine braces for Trump–Putin summit

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Thursday praised “sincere efforts” by the U.S. to end the war in Ukraine and floated the prospect of a nuclear arms deal ahead of a summit with President Donald Trump where Europe has urged Trump to stand firm.

Putin was speaking to his most senior ministers and security officials as he prepared for the meeting with Trump in Anchorage, Alaska on Friday that could shape the endgame to the largest war in Europe since World War Two.

It follows intensified efforts by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and his European allies to prevent any deal that carves up Ukraine’s territory and leaves it vulnerable to future attack.

Putin said in televised comments that the U.S. was “making, in my opinion, quite energetic and sincere efforts to stop the hostilities, stop the crisis and reach agreements that are of interest to all parties involved in this conflict”.

This was happening, Putin said, “in order to create long-term conditions for peace between our countries, and in Europe, and in the world as a whole - if, by the next stages, we reach agreements in the area of control over strategic offensive weapons.”

His comments signalled that Russia will raise the issue of nuclear arms control as part of a wide-ranging discussion on security when he sits down with Trump for the first Russia-U.S. summit since June 2021.

A senior eastern European official, who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, said Putin would try to distract Trump



▲ Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer walk out of 10 Downing Street, in London, Britain.

from Ukraine at the talks by offering him possible progress on nuclear arms control or something business-related.

“We hope Trump won’t be fooled by the Russians, he understands all (these) dangerous things,” the official said.

“The only strategic goal for the Russians is not to receive new sanctions, and to lift the sanctions that the U.S. and others (imposed) previously. The Russians have no other big goals now. They think they will find a way to take all of Ukraine in one way or another,”

the source added.

SEEKING CLARITY ON SECURITY GUARANTEES

Ukraine’s allies said Trump was willing to back security guarantees for Kyiv, a potentially significant but as yet vague offer that could give some hope to Ukraine.

Trump had shown willingness to join the guarantees at a last-ditch virtual meeting with European leaders and Zelenskiy on Wednesday, leaders said, though he made no public mention of them afterwards.

“Yesterday, together with all our partners, and today in a bilateral format, we discussed expectations for the meeting in Alaska and possible prospects,” Zelenskiy said after a meeting in London with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

We also discussed in considerable detail the security guarantees that can make peace truly durable if the United States succeeds in pressing Russia to stop the killings and engage in genuine, substantive diplomacy.”

Friday’s summit comes at one of the toughest moments for Ukraine in a war that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions since Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Speaking after Wednesday’s meeting, French President Emmanuel Macron said Trump insisted that the transatlantic NATO alliance should not be part of security guarantees that would be designed to protect Ukraine from future attacks in a post-war settlement.

“President Trump also stated this clearly, saying things that I find important: namely, that NATO should not be part of these security guarantees - and we know this is a key point, particularly for the Russian side - but (also) that the United States and all willing allies should be part of them. That is what we are committed to,” Macron said.

Expanding on that, a European official told Reuters that Trump said on the call he was willing to provide some security guarantees for Europe, without spelling out what they would be.

(Reuters)

Israel’s Smotrich announces settlement plan to ‘bury’ idea of Palestinian state

ISRAELI far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced work would start on a long-delayed settlement that would divide the West Bank and cut it off from East Jerusalem, a move his office said would “bury” the idea of a Palestinian state.

The Palestinian government, allies and campaign groups condemned the scheme, calling it illegal and saying the fragmentation of territory would rip up any internationally backed peace plans for the region.

Standing at the site of the planned settlement in Maale Adumim on Thursday, Smotrich said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Donald Trump had agreed to the revival of the E1 development, though there was no immediate confirmation from either.

“Whoever in the world is trying to recognise a Palestinian state today will receive our answer on the ground. Not with documents nor with decisions or statements, but with facts. Facts of houses, facts of neighbourhoods,” Smotrich said.

Israel froze construction plans at Maale Adumim in 2012, and again after a revival in 2020, because of objections from the U.S., European allies and other powers who considered the project a threat to any future peace deal with the Palestinians.

The move could further isolate Israel, which has watched some of its Western allies condemn its military offensive in Gaza and announce they will recognise a Palestinian state.

Palestinians fear the settlement building in the West Bank - which has sharply intensified since the 2023 Hamas attack on Israel that led to the Gaza war - will rob them of

any chance to build a state of their own in the area.

In a statement headlined “Burying the idea of a Palestinian state,” Smotrich’s spokesperson said the minister had approved the plan to build 3,401 houses for Israeli settlers between an existing settlement in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

In Maale Adumim, Smotrich told Reuters the plan would go into effect on Wednesday.

Breaking the Silence, an Israeli rights group established by former Israeli soldiers, criticised Smotrich, accusing him of encouraging West Bank settlement activity while the world’s attention was on the Gaza war.

“This land grab and settlement expansion will not only further fragment the Palestinian territory, but will further entrench apartheid,” it said.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the Palestinian president’s spokesperson, called on the United States to pressure Israel to stop settlement building.

“The EU rejects any territorial change that is not part of a political agreement between involved parties. So annexation of territory is illegal under international law,” European Commission spokesperson Anitta Hipper said during a press briefing.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said the move showed that Israel “seeks to appropriate land owned by Palestinians in order to prevent a two-state solution”.

Qatar, which has mediated between Hamas and Israel in efforts to secure a ceasefire in Gaza, condemned Smotrich’s actions as a “blatant violation of international law”.

HOUSE BUILDING ‘IN A YEAR’

Peace Now, which tracks settlement activity in the West Bank, said there were still steps needed before construction. But if all



▲ Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich speaks at a press conference regarding settlements expansion for the long-frozen E1 settlement, that would split East Jerusalem from the occupied West Bank, near the Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim in the Israeli-occupied West Bank,

went through, infrastructure work could begin within a few months, and house building in about a year.

“The E1 plan is deadly for the future of Israel and for any chance of achieving a peaceful two-state solution. We are standing at the edge of an abyss, and the government is driving us forward at full speed,” Peace Now said in a statement.

Palestinians were already demoralised by the Israeli military campaign which has killed more than 61,000 people in Gaza, ac-

cording to local health authorities, and fear Israel will ultimately push them out of that territory.

About 700,000 Israeli settlers live among 2.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israel annexed East Jerusalem in a move not recognised by most countries but has not formally extended sovereignty over the West Bank.

(Reuters)



Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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IF you're seeking the perfect way to unwind and enjoy some fun this weekend, your search is over.

Eswatini Daily News is here to help you make the most of your leisure time with our comprehensive gig guide, showcasing the most thrilling events happening in town. So, grab a refreshing drink, invite your friends, and get ready for a weekend brimming with joy, laughter, and unforgettable moments.

►► NEON NIGHTS WITH THE QUEENS

When: Saturday

Where: Espinho Restaurant & Bar

Fee: E50

Espinho Restaurant & Bar is about to dial the energy up this August. The establishment will host the highly anticipated "Neon Nights with the Queens" event on Saturday, August 16, 2025, a night promising electrifying beats, dazzling lights, and unapologetic glamour. With its stylish décor and signature cocktails, Espinho Lounge has carved a niche for itself in Eswatini's nightlife scene. This time, however, they're taking things to a new dimension, a neon dimension. At the helm of the night's entertainment is the powerhouse headliner, ItsAllBlaq. Known for blending infectious rhythms with deep, bass-driven drops, she's built a loyal following across Southern Africa's club circuit. Supporting her will be DJ Khuni and Keiisy, two equally formidable talents in the region's music scene. The event has been created to make sure guests not only hear the music but feel it. Ladies will especially have reason to celebrate. Entrance is free before 7 pm. After that, the cover charge for everyone is E50, a small price for a night of top-tier entertainment.

►► SHOW ME YOUR LEGS FRIDAY

When: Friday

Where: Xchange Lounge & Shisanyama

Fee: E50

The Xchange Lounge & Shisanyama is about to set the weekend ablaze with its sizzling event, "Show Me Your Legs Friday", happening this Friday, 15 August 2025. Known for its vibrant nightlife and high-energy atmosphere, the venue promises an evening where style, rhythm, and celebration collide. The star-studded lineup is headlined by Ayacity and Young Zesh, two crowd-pulling powerhouses ready to deliver electrifying performances. They will be joined by a strong supporting cast including Teesto, Bisto, Cnatra Black, Harmonicq, Daza, and Rorro, ensuring that from the first beat to the last call, the party never loses momentum. The event's playful theme invites guests to flaunt their confidence and summer-ready legs, blending music, fashion, and fun in one unforgettable night. With The Xchange's signature shisanyama delicacies on the grill, expertly mixed cocktails at the bar, and a dance floor ready for action, the vibe promises to be unmatched. Early birds can take advantage of an E50 entry fee before midnight, while those arriving later will still get their slice of the action at E80 thereafter.

►► FRIDAY AFTERWORK GROOVE

When: Friday

Where: IF's Lounge, Mbabane

Fee: Free

At the end of a long workweek, there's nothing quite like the Friday Afterwork Groove at IF's Lounge, Mbabane. This regular social gathering has become a favourite among locals looking to unwind



A weekend of fun!

and kick off the weekend in style. This event offers attendees the perfect opportunity to relax, enjoy good company, and let loose after a busy week. From delicious food to refreshing drinks and great music, there's something for everyone at the Friday Afterwork Groove. This week's event promises to be extra special, with M.P.H.O. and Tairro headlining the night's entertainment. The event will be supported by resident DJs.

►► PLAY FOR THE CITY

When: Friday

Where: 23:28 Lounge

Fee: Free

The capital city of Mbabane is abuzz with anticipation as the countdown begins for the highly anticipated Play For The City event. Music lovers and party enthusiasts are in for a treat as the stage is set for a night of pure musical magic, headlined by the sensational MBO and Tibza featuring SabeloOG as the Guest DJ. Scheduled to kick off at 6 pm, the Play For The City event is poised to deliver an unforgettable experience that will leave attendees enthralled and electrified. With a lineup of top-tier talent and a promise of non-stop entertainment, this event is shaping up to be the highlight of the summer in Mbabane. One of the most exciting aspects of the event is that entry is completely free, ensuring that music enthusiasts of all

backgrounds and ages can come together to celebrate and revel in the joy of live music. This inclusive approach adds an extra layer of excitement to the event, as the community comes together to dance, sing, and create lasting memories in the heart of the city. Attendees can also look forward to special offers on Black Crown.

►► FRIDAY GROOVE

Where: IF's Lounge, Manzini

When: Friday

Fee: Free

Music lovers gear up for the highly anticipated event, 'Friday Groove,' set to take place at IF's Lounge this Friday. Promising a night filled with electrifying performances and unforgettable moments, this event is shaping up to be the talk of the town. Headlining the event is the sensational Sweet Shandis, known for his high-energy performances and ability to get the crowd on their feet. Joining him on stage will be a lineup of stellar supporting acts, including Mistosoul, Yamkela, and Acoustic Soul, each bringing their distinct style and sound to the mix. Attendees are encouraged to dress to impress, following the smart casual theme for the evening. This promises to be a night of music, fun, and camaraderie that is accessible to all. Friday Groove offers an opportunity to immerse yourself in a vibrant atmosphere and enjoy top-notch performances.





▲ Sancheziey with famous traditional dancer Mabhodweni during his listening session at Mbabane Library.



▲ Sancheziey making remarks.

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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ESWATINI musician Sancheziey has recently hosted a successful listening session for his highly anticipated album, 'Salukazana.'

The event took place at the Mbabane Library on Wednesday, just days ahead of the album's official release this Sunday. With Salukazana, Sancheziey aims to create an unapologetically Swati sonic tapestry that intertwines love, proverbs, ancestral echoes, and infectious rhythms, inviting listeners to dance in the traditional imvunulo attire. Additionally, Lasiies Crafts announced to dress up Sancheziey with imihelwane going forth for all his performances.

Central to this artistic endeavour is the track Siyabonga Gogo, a song that has not only catapulted him into the limelight but has also served as a vehicle for cultural reclamation. Released on March 30, 2025, Siyabonga Gogo has been a transformative piece for Sancheziey, acting as a compass that has guided his artistic journey.

The song has become a defining moment in his career, providing him with identity and direction after years of exploring a sound that resonated with him. "The traditional sound in the album is inspired by my song Siyabonga Gogo," Sancheziey reflected. "That song has given me identity, given me a possible light in the chase I've had for like 8 years." Sancheziey recognised that the success of Siyabonga Gogo was steering the direction of his subsequent works. "With all that, I'm trying to piece the layers that led to the uniqueness of Siyabonga Gogo that just birthed a raw Swati sound," he explained. This pivot towards a distinctly Swati expression is a hallmark of Salukazana, which is steeped in the rich romance of Swati customs and traditions.

The tracks on Salukazana are infused with the essence of Swati life, designed for significant cultural events such as emalobolo negotiations, umtsimba processions, and imihlambiso gift-giving ceremonies. Sancheziey emphasises that the album is not merely about abstract love; it captures love as it is experienced within the homesteads and traditions of Eswatini. "The happy and Swati-cultural happy vibe is the heart of the album," he stated, highlighting the importance of cultural authenticity in his music.

Interestingly, the artist has noticed a

Sancheziey successfully hosts 'Salukazana' listening session



▲ Lasiies Crafts announced to dress up Sancheziey with imihelwane going forth for all his performances.

shift in how his audience perceives him. "People aren't shouting 'Sancheziey' anymore. They're calling him 'Salukazana,'" he remarked. This change prompted him to run a poll on social media to decide the album's title, with Salukazana emerging as the clear favourite among fans. The title not only reflects his artistic evolution but also resonates with the warmth and love he wishes to convey through his music.

Album

While love is a central theme, not all tracks on the album are lighthearted. The song Myekeleni, the last recorded track, was born from a place of grief. Sancheziey experienced the loss of his uncle shortly before the album's completion, and the emotional weight of that experience influenced the song's creation. "Such an experience led to the making of Myekeleni," he explained, illustrating how personal loss can inspire profound artistic expression.

Conceptually, Salukazana and his previous

album, Umshado waSancheziey, revolve around love, yet they differ significantly in sound. While Umshado incorporated a blend of Afropop, soul, and traditional elements, Salukazana is a celebration of pure Swati sound. The lyrics are rich with idioms that resonate deeply with a Swati audience, creating a linguistic intimacy that enhances the album's identity.

The music video for Siyabonga Gogo transcended typical promotional visuals, evolving into a cultural capsule. Ejal'dini Studios encouraged Sancheziey to develop a narrative that honoured Swati customs, leading to the selection of sacred spaces for ancestor veneration. The video showcases the cast in traditional imvunulo, bringing authenticity to each frame, while cultural advisor Khulelamajaha ensured that the script respected Swati traditions. "The casts left their pride but brought their hearts and passion," he noted, emphasising the collaborative spirit that defined the project.



▲ Sancheziey has successfully hosted 'Salukazana' listening session.

DJ Maphorisa opens up about the changing Amapiano scene

VIRAL hits and sold-out shows have made Amapiano's glitz and glamour a social media staple.

Yet, beneath the surface, lies an intensely competitive world that few truly understand.

In a candid revelation, DJ Maphorisa has slightly pulled back the curtain on the industry, offering a raw and unfiltered look at the realities of the Amapiano scene.

During his recent interview with Metro FM's Tbo Touch, the music heavyweight opened up about how the dynamics in the industry have shifted dramatically over the past few years.

"It's tough now, it's not easy - it's not like before," Maphorisa admitted.

Touch immediately responded, "Wait, wait, wait. I'm getting a headache. If I'm an upcoming artist listening to this conversation and



▲ DJ Maphorisa has slightly pulled back the curtain on the industry, offering a raw and unfiltered look at the realities of the Amapiano scene.

the biggest artist says it's tough, I'm going to give up. How is it tough, Phorry?"

Maphorisa didn't shy away. "There's too much competition. People have short attention spans. They may love one song from you and stick with that for about six months. But if you release 10 hot songs, not all of them will get the reception you expect."

He went on to explain how this shift affects the way artists release and market their music. The emotional and creative toll is significant when audiences only latch onto one hit from an entire album.

Using his latest project as an example, Maphorisa

shared, "I dropped an album called 'Ngomoya'. So far, I've released 28 songs, but they only really like one." Maphorisa's candour comes ahead of the highly anticipated "Scorpion Kings Live with Friends" set to take place at Loftus Versfeld Stadium on Friday, August 29.

The event is expected to draw fans from across the country, underscoring the duo's status as Amapiano royalty.

Amapiano itself has experienced meteoric growth since emerging in the townships of Gauteng in the early 2010s. Initially an underground movement, it has since become a global phenomenon, dominating charts, festivals and playlists worldwide.

Artists like Maphorisa and Kabza De Small have played a central role in shaping the genre, blending deep house, jazz and kwaito to create a uniquely South African sound that resonates far beyond the country's borders.

Yet with its rise comes gatekeeping and challenges within the industry.

As Amapiano becomes more mainstream, the competition intensifies and staying relevant requires not just talent but strategic releases, collaborations and constant engagement with a fickle audience.

For fans, this insight offers a rare glimpse into the pressures behind the beats they love - a reminder that for every viral hit, there's a story of perseverance, strategy and resilience in the fast-paced world of Amapiano.

(IOL)

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.

Unreliable and dishonest incidents

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. He asked people to please refrain from asking him any further questions on the matter.

Speaking to Sunday World, Makhadzi confirmed their split.

"I take my work seriously. I respect my fans and the people who support me. And I try to show up on time, look good, and be professional. I need someone in my team who shows the same respect," she said.

"Snani was sometimes unavailable or double-booked himself, knowing he is my full-time DJ. It's sad because he is like a brother to me, but I had to let him go."

Makhadzi is currently preparing for her One Woman show. The annual experience is taking place at Makhuvha Stadium and Rabali Stadium in Limpopo on December 20 and 21.

"I am finalising my album and working towards the show, so the team needs to focus. If there is anyone available to replace him, they can contact my team." (Sunday World)



Destitute 'Uzalo' actor Glen Gabela battles depression and heart attack

LEGENDARY South African actor Glen Gabela has issued a heartfelt plea for help, revealing that he is battling depression and struggling to survive.

In a viral social media video, Gabela is seen tearfully pleading for help. His fridge contains nothing but containers of water.

"I just want a decent life, like everyone else. That's why I'm reaching out. I want to engage with people and help grow the film industry, so upcoming performers don't end up like us. I want their lives to be better. And I don't want them to face the same struggles we do.

Actors battling to survive

"All veteran actors, when they pass, you hear about how they struggled. Almost all of us, by the time we reach this age, become beggars. It's painful for me, because begging is very difficult for me. I just need help to live a decent life. I don't need to be rich," he pleaded.

In an exclusive interview with Sunday World, the veteran actor, best known for his memorable role as Pastor Mdletshe in the hit SABC 1 soapie Uzalo, was candid. He opened up about the toll that years of unemployment and industry neglect have taken on him. "I recently had a heart attack and I was in hospital for three weeks. Doctors told me it was because of stress and depression, which is something I already knew. The industry is hard, and I haven't secured any job since 2018 when I was booted out of Uzalo.

This has taken a huge toll on me. I'm struggling, I can't even take care of myself."

Gabela's career spans decades, with notable appearances in South African television, theatre, and film.

His work has earned him respect across the entertainment landscape. Yet he says the shift from regular acting roles to unemployment has been devastating.

All he needs is a job

"I have over 21 scripts waiting to be developed into TV plays and films. I'm now a scriptwriter and a producer, but the problem is funding. And I need these plays to be developed into actual screenplays, but I don't have resources. I haven't formally applied for funding, but I am talking to business people," he said.

The actor stressed that, more than anything, he needs a job right now.

"I don't want to be a burden to anyone, hence I'm asking for a job so I can get back on my feet. I'm appealing to producers and directors to remember me."

Currently based in Johannesburg, Gabela says he has been surviving thanks to the kindness of good Samaritans who brought him food.

"I am really grateful to those who came with food, it really means a lot to me." Industry crisis

Gabela's story echoes a recurring crisis in the South African entertainment industry. Many veteran actors and behind-the-scenes



▲ Legendary South African actor Glen Gabela.

creatives face financial hardship after years of contributing to the nation's cultural legacy.

A lack of consistent work, limited retirement planning options, and inadequate industry support structures have left many icons in precarious positions once their most prominent roles end.

For Gabela, the hope remains that his scripts will be brought to life. And that a fresh opportunity will allow him to reclaim his place in front of and behind the camera.

(Sunday World)

THAT’S why a surprising new study, published Wednesday, is drawing public and clinical attention, showing that adults with disabling low-back pain who completed just eight sessions of a novel therapy saw sustained improvements in their pain and activity levels – even after three years.

The treatment, called cognitive functional therapy (CFT), blends physical therapy with a psychology-based approach.

CFT “teaches patients how to manage their own symptoms, what their pain experience means, and how they can move forward without injuring themselves,” said Chad E. Cook, PT, PhD, a pain researcher at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. (Cook was not involved in the study.)

Teaching people to self-manage pain is the cornerstone of the approach, Cook said. It’s “why the authors saw improvements at three years – which is very uncommon.”

The study included 312 adults in Australia with an average pain level of 4 or more on a 10-point scale – enough to interfere with daily living and work activities.

Of those who completed the CFT (which included seven 30- to 60-minute sessions over 12 weeks, plus an eighth “booster” session at 26 weeks), more than 40% saw improvement in their activity level – and maintained that improvement after three years, compared to 17% in a comparison group who received usual care.

Pain scores dropped by an average of 2 points in the CFT group, compared with less than 1 point in the usual care group, and that was also sustained after three years.

The average age of people in the study was 48, but benefits were seen among a wide range of ages, said study author Mark Hancock, PhD.

Here are three things to know about CFT for low-back pain, a condition that affects more than 1 in 4 U.S. adults.

CFT helped the people that nothing else worked for.

Most people in the study did not expect the treatment to work, likely because other treatments they’d tried had failed.

“The poor outcomes of mainstream approaches are one of the reasons the authors created CFT,” Cook said. “Before giving up, it is worth speaking with a CFT clinician to determine if the approach is right for you.”

People with the most severe low-back pain have the most to gain: They’re the ones who tend to reap the greatest benefit from CFT, the research showed.

CFT is low risk and can be done anywhere.

There’s no clear go-to therapy for low-back pain, and many options – like surgery or opioids – carry high risks. Research on most treatments shows mixed results, and scientists haven’t yet figured out how to tailor them to individual patients.

But anyone can do CFT, anywhere. Many of the people in the study did their sessions via virtual appointments, although Hancock recommends doing the first session in person.

It’s movement and psychotherapy combined.

Back pain relief from this therapy can last for years



A course of CFT is highly personalized, but it might include:

- Tailoring therapy based on what’s causing your pain – an old back injury or past surgery, for example – and your experiences from treatments that didn’t work
- Tracking exactly when and where pain shows up – like if it worsens while sitting, climbing stairs, or after certain movements
- Challenging unhelpful beliefs about pain, such as “I will never be able to work again” or “my posture is wrong”
- Practicing specific movements and psychological strategies with the therapist – like learning to move despite discomfort,

training your body not to respond by tensing up (known as muscle guarding), and focusing instead on relaxing the muscles (which can ease pain)

- Relearning everyday movements that matter to you – such as standing or sitting without pain, walking the dog, or getting back on the bike – along with strength training and lifestyle habits that support recovery
- Developing helpful internal monologues, like “I became mindful to my response to pain” or “I don’t fear my pain anymore”

How Do You Get Started with CFT?

Because it’s an emerging therapy, you

may not readily find a CFT-trained physical therapist. If you can’t find one close to you, Hancock suggested searching for a physical therapist who describes themselves as “more of a coach, helping you to understand your back pain and giving you skills and confidence to return to activity.”

In the meantime, Hancock, a professor of physiotherapy and back pain researcher at Australia’s Macquarie University in Sydney, offers these tips:

Try to keep moving during pain, rather than resting or avoiding activity. Relax and try to move normally.

View your pain as a warning sign, but not as message that damage is happening. If you gradually do more, the pain usually is reduced.

A healthy lifestyle is also important, including sleep and diet.

WebMD

IF you have psoriatic arthritis (PsA), you already know about joint pain and skin problems.

But you might be surprised to learn that PsA can affect your health in other ways, too.

The same inflammation that attacks your skin and joints can cause trouble in other parts of your body. PsA treatments may help prevent some of these problems. But the best way to help stop complications is to stay active, eat right, and stay at a healthy weight.

Diabetes

PsA ups your chance of type 2 diabetes by more than 40%. Type 2 diabetes usually happens because your body doesn't use insulin as well as it should. That means your cells can't use sugar as well, so it builds up in your blood. There are a few reasons this might happen in PsA. One could be inflammation. Your lifestyle also plays a big role in type 2 diabetes. When you're not active or don't eat a healthy diet, it's harder to keep your blood sugar in a normal range.

Heart Disease

With PsA, you're more likely to have heart problems than other people. If you're overweight or have diabetes, your risk is even higher. Some doctors believe the link between PsA and heart disease is inflammation. It may cause fatty deposits called plaques to build up inside your blood vessels. This makes the vessels narrower, so your heart has to work harder to move your blood. Sometimes the plaques break off and cause a clot. This can trigger a heart attack or stroke. Researchers are still studying the role of inflammation in heart disease.

It's a good idea to focus on the steps you can take to prevent heart disease:

- ▶ If you smoke, stop.
- ▶ Watch your weight.
- ▶ Control your blood sugar.
- ▶ Get some exercise every day.
- ▶ Eat a heart-healthy diet.
- ▶ Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

There are two types of IBD: ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. Both cause inflammation in your digestive tract. Symptoms often include cramping, pain, and severe diarrhea. You might also lose weight and feel tired most of the time.

IBD and psoriatic arthritis share certain genetic features that make you more likely to have the conditions. But the biggest link between the two conditions is inflammation. Some of the proteins that cause inflammation and trigger PsA are also involved in IBD. That's why certain medicines, like TNF blockers, may help both conditions. But be aware that other PsA drugs can cause IBD or make it worse. Talk to your doctor about the safest medicines you can take and about lifestyle changes that can help with your condition, like a healthy diet, regular exercise, and easing stress.

Mood Disorders

It's no surprise that depression is common in people with PsA. It's not always an easy disease to live with. But there's another reason you may feel down. The same proteins that trigger inflammation in PsA also cause changes in the brain. These

Surprising complications of Psoriatic Arthritis



changes can lead to depression and other mood disorders.

You might think that the same medicines that help lower inflammation in PsA would also lift your mood. But that may not always happen. If you feel sad most of the time or don't enjoy things you used to, tell your doctor. They may suggest you talk to a counselor or therapist.

Spondylitis

This is a type of arthritis that causes inflammation in the bones of your spine. You're most likely to have pain and stiffness in your lower back, where your spine and pelvis meet. Sometimes you might get inflammation in the joints in your shoulders or chest. No matter where you have symptoms, they often come and go. For instance, you might be stiff when

you wake up, but feel better once you move around. With severe spondylitis, some of the bones in your spine can fuse together. That can make it hard to bend your back. In severe cases, you might have a stooped posture. This is more common in a different but related disease called ankylosing spondylitis. Still, exercise is important. It relieves pain and stiffness and helps your posture.

Uveitis

PsA can cause many eye problems. Uveitis is one of the most common. It causes inflammation in your eye. Symptoms like pain, redness, and blurry vision can come on fast and lead to vision loss if you don't address them right away. So be sure to let your doctor know ASAP if you notice them.

● Some doctors believe the link between PsA and heart disease is inflammation. It may cause fatty deposits called plaques to build up inside your blood vessels. This makes the vessels narrower, so your heart has to work harder to move your blood.

News In Pictures



▲ Metro Transit Police and Homeland Security Investigations officers search the vehicle of a person detained for a driver's licence issue



▲ U.S. Vice President JD Vance speaks in front of a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft in a hangar as he addresses troops from the USAF 501 combat support wing during a visit to RAF Fairford airbase, Fairford, Britain.



▲ A helicopter drops water on a wildfire approaching Trancoso, Portugal.



▲ Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in the garden of 10 Downing Street in central London.



▲ A Serbian police officer stands next to a detained protester during standoff between supporters of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and anti-government protesters, in Belgrade, Serbia.

Cardoso backs Sales amid criticism ahead of Pirates showdown

MAMELODI Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso has thrown his support behind striker Arthur Sales, who continues to divide opinion among supporters more than a year after his arrival in South Africa.

The tall Brazilian endured a slow start in the Betway Premiership last season after joining the Chloorkop-based side.

Sales improvement

He has shown improvement in the new campaign, registering a goal and an assist in his first three matches across all competitions. Still, sections of the Sundowns fan base remain unconvinced, and following Tuesday night's 2-0 win over AmaZulu, Cardoso leapt to the defence of the 23-year-old.

'People judge him too much'

"There's a lot of misunderstanding towards Arthur and people judge him too much. People mustn't look at him and say because he's on the right he will be like Lucas Ribeiro," Cardoso said.

"Each player has their own characteristics. Arthur is a very good player who arrived in South Africa and didn't get the attention and credit he deserved. I think people are starting to gradually understand him if you look

at his numbers and the impact he made. He was always giving goals and assists, I think Arthur was already important last season.

"He's a little underrated in terms of what he can really do. We saw a fantastic second half from him against AmaZulu. If he had been more selfish, he could have scored more than one goal. He scores goals very easily and will continue to do so this season like Peter and Iqraam Rayners, because he's clever and will only get better."

Growing discontent

Ahead of Saturday's MTN8 semifinal first leg away to Orlando Pirates at Orlando Stadium, Cardoso also addressed growing discontent among the Masandawana faithful over the team's unconvincing displays so far this campaign. Sundowns have been far from their fluent best despite two wins in three matches and they have drawn criticism from their notoriously hard-to-please supporters.

"I was also disappointed because we are at a club that wants to win all matches, so being disappointed with a draw is normal (Sundowns drew their first Premiership match of the season 1-1 with Chippa United). If you went into our change room after the game, you'd have seen how people looked like



▲ Arthur Sales.

someone had just died," Cardoso explained.

"So it's normal and you accept that people are not happy. With the result is one thing, but being unhappy with people who work hard every day to produce good results is an-

other, and I didn't feel that. Even after the 2-0 win over AmaZulu, players were urging each other to 'kill off games' to make life easier going forward, and it's fantastic to have that kind of atmosphere." (Supersport)

Zverev finishes overnight job at Cincinnati Open

Polished off a weather-hit third-round victory at the Cincinnati Open on Wednesday, winning the final four points of a 6-4, 6-4 win over Brandon Nakashima before weather again disrupted play.

The entire one-game exercise, with 2021 Cincy winner Zverev leading 6-4, 5-4 when play resumed, took less than two minutes, with the third seed set for a later fourth-round encounter against Toronto finalist Karen Khachanov.

Women's third seed Iga Swiatek and men's seventh seed Holger Rune both booked quarterfinal berths before afternoon showers struck.

Wimbledon champion Swiatek beat Sorana Cirstea 6-4, 6-3, overcoming 33 unforced errors in a 95-minute victory.

Cincinnati is one of only two 1000-level events where the former world No 1 has not reached a final, along with Canada.

She clinched her spot in the last eight with a winner into the empty court, reaching a third straight quarterfinal in the US Open tuneup event.

"I wanted to be more solid than in my last match," Swiatek said. "I'm happy with the level of my focus and the consistency."

"It was a good match for sure. Not easy conditions as well, super humid, so I'm happy that I didn't let this affect me."

Rune advanced as 2024 finalist Frances Tiafoe retired with lower back pain with Denmark's Rune up 6-4, 3-1.

The match was a re-run of a quarterfinal here a year ago, won by the American who went on to fall in the final to Jannik Sinner.

Tiafoe was treated for his back



▲ Former champion Alexander Zverev.

problem, but did not seem to lead to improvement as Rune gained control.

A shirtless Tiafoe walked dejectedly off court, carrying only a pair of shoes while an official carted away his massive tennis bag.

Rune, bothered this season by his own injury worries, secured his 100th career hard-court win and his first defeat of a top 20 opponent since he beat Carlos Alcaraz in the Barcelona final in April.

"I had a little slow start but I came back quickly and increased my intensity a lot," Rune said. "I was moving the ball around well, in the middle of the first set I started to play well."

"It's never nice to finish this way, but I'm happy with my level. I felt something was not right with him after I broke in the first set (for 5-4)."

"I tried to move him around as

much as possible, I wish him the best possible recovery."

LINETTE SHOCKS PEGULA

Magda Linette broke new ground, reaching the fourth round at Cincinnati for the first time with a 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-3 upset of fourth-seeded American Jessica Pegula.

The 40th-ranked Pole had never won a set from the American, who was runner-up to Aryna Sabalenka in Cincy last year.

The pair returned to finish the contest halted the night before with the match level at one set each.

Pegula was broken for 3-5 as a shot clipped the top of the net and rolled back onto her side. Linette finished the match moments later with a service winner.

"I'm really appreciating this win," Linette said.

(Supersport)

McLaren to auction 2026 F1 car before it has been raced

CHAMPIONS McLaren claimed a first on Thursday by announcing the auction of one of their 2026 Formula One cars before it has even been raced.

The F1 car, which will be driven by Oscar Piastri or Lando Norris, is one of a trio of future chassis offered by McLaren in the 5 December sale organised by RM Sotheby's ahead of this year's season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

The other two are a 2026 Arrow McLaren Indycar, to be raced at the Indianapolis 500 next May by Mexican Pato O'Ward, and McLaren's inaugural 2027 World Endurance Hypercar that will compete in the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

McLaren Chief Executive Zak

Brown said the auction would be the first time a future Formula One car had been sold before it had been unveiled to the public.

The as-yet unnamed 2026 car, likely to be the MCL40 after this year's MCL39, will be the team's first for a new era in Formula One with a big change in technical and engine regulations.

The successful bidder will have to wait until 2028 to take delivery, with a 2025 show car offered on lease until then to the buyer, who will also have behind-the-scenes access to the team and events.

The other cars will be delivered after the respective series have ended.

(Supersport)



Bucs look to bounce back against Sundowns

ORLANDO Pirates' quest for a fourth successive MTN8 title continues as they host Mamelodi Sundowns in the first leg of the semifinals at Orlando Stadium in Soweto on Saturday. The Buccaneers began their season by defeating Polokwane City 2-0 at home in their MTN8 quarterfinal, but have not managed a win since.

Pirates have lost back-to-back games to start the 2025-26 Betway Premiership, falling 1-0 to Sekhukhune United before being beaten 2-1 by Marumo Gallants.

New head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou will be under pressure to walk away with a win on Saturday.

Sundowns marched into the semifinals with an emphatic 4-0 victory over Richards Bay in the quarterfinals to start the season. However, they could not make it two in a row and were held to a 1-1 draw by Chipata United in their league opener.

Masandawana returned to winning ways on Tuesday with a 2-0 victory over AmaZulu and will look to extend their unbeaten streak on Saturday.

WHAT WAS SAID

Orlando Pirates head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou understands Buccaneers fans' frustrations with the team's start to the season.

"We understand [the fans] when the club loses two games in a row, it's normal that they are not happy and we are not happy as well," said



▲ Orlando Pirates new coach Abdeslam Ouaddou.

Ouaddou following Pirates' loss to Marumo Gallants on Tuesday.

"I know we have to react because we're a big club, we have to react very quickly to find solutions."

Mamelodi Sundowns head coach Miguel Cardoso has admitted that transfer speculation surrounding Lucas Ribeiro, Peter Shalulile and Khuliso Mudau has contributed to his side's slow start to the season.

"It's not easy to deal with what's happening in the team and not worry about that or not be concerned about that, or not believe it's not impacting the team, we would be naive to think things can happen and the players don't relate with those

things," Cardoso said following Masandawana's win over AmaZulu on Tuesday.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

Orlando Pirates - Deon Hotto: Deon Hotto has performed well to start the season, presenting an attacking threat down the left-hand side and already providing one assist this season. Hotto was nominated for the MTN8 Last Man Standing award last season, and will certainly try to make his case for the accolade again.

Mamelodi Sundowns - Iqraam Rayners: Iqraam Rayners has bagged three goals in three games to start the season. (**The Citizen**)

Springbok great Dawie Snyman dies

SPRINGBOK utility back Dawie Snyman passed away on Thursday after an illness at the age of 76.

Born in Bloemfontein on 5 July 1949 and educated at Grey College, Snyman's rugby journey took him to Stellenbosch University, where he represented Maties and Western Province with distinction.

He earned 10 Test caps for South Africa between 1972 and 1977, playing both fullback and flyhalf and scoring a try, four penalty goals, two drop goals and a conversion in the green and gold. In total, he played 22 matches for the Springboks, amassing 86 points.

Snyman, whose older brother Jackie also played Test rugby for South Africa, was selected for the Boks before playing senior provincial rugby when he toured to Australia in 1971. Only after that tour did Snyman make his WP debut.

Coaching career

He remained loyal to the blue and white hoops and coached WP to five consecutive Currie Cup titles, from 1982 to 1986, as well as a shared title with the Bulls in 1989.

Snyman also coached South Africa at the 1997 Sevens World Cup, where the Blitzboks lost to Fiji in the final in Hong Kong, while was also involved with the Lions and at Stellenbosch University.

"Dawie will not only be remembered as a determined player who worked extremely



▲ Former Springbok player Dawie Snyman has passed away.

hard and succeeded at international level in two positions, but also as one of the finest coaches South African rugby has known," said SA Rugby president Mark Alexander.

"He could have played much longer, but chose instead to invest in the game as a mentor and leader, shaping generations of players with his insight and passion. His contribution to rugby in South Africa is immeasurable.

"It is never easy to lose a member of the South African rugby family. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Pam, his daughters Louise, Patse, Pam and Danielle and to their extended family, loved ones and friends during this time of bereavement.

"May you find comfort in the legacy of a man who will forever be remembered as one of the greats of South African rugby.

(**The Citizen**)

Liverpool man accused of football parade crash faces new charges

A British man accused of driving his vehicle into crowds celebrating Liverpool's Premier League title win faces an additional 24 criminal charges, prosecutors revealed on Thursday at his latest court hearing.

Former British Marine Paul Doyle, 53, appeared tearful as he joined the hearing at Liverpool Crown Court via videolink from prison, when details of the new counts stemming from the 26 May incident emerged.

Merseyside Police now say 134 people were injured when Doyle allegedly drove his Ford Galaxy Titanium into crowds who were leaving Liverpool's waterfront after a victory parade.

The 31 charges in total now filed involve 29 victims, aged between six months and 77, the court heard.

Six relate to children, including two babies - one aged six months at the time and one aged seven months - who were injured when the car hit people massed on Water Street in the city centre.

Supporters of the city's world-famous football team had thronged its streets to celebrate the club's record-equalling 20th English top-flight title when scenes of joy turned to horror.

Doyle, a father-of-three from the Croxteth neighbourhood in the city,



was initially charged with seven offences, including dangerous driving and causing grievous bodily harm with intent.

He now faces multiple additional counts under that and other charges, including 19 for attempting to cause grievous bodily harm, three of wounding with intent, and one of affray.

Doyle, wearing a grey T-shirt, did not enter any pleas during the

20-minute hearing, which several relatives of the victims and more than 20 members of the media attended.

Judge Andrew Menary adjourned the case until 4 September, when Doyle is expected to enter pleas.

Earlier this year, a provisional trial date was fixed for 24 November, with the case expected to last three to four weeks.

(**Supersport**)

Alonso's Real Madrid start La Liga with fresh energy

REAL Madrid, featuring several new signings, approach the new season with fresh hope under recently-appointed coach Xabi Alonso, looking to turn the page on a disappointing end to the Carlo Ancelotti era with "ambitious" football.

Former Liverpool and Los Blancos midfielder Alonso saw at the Club World Cup in the United States this summer there is plenty of work to do, as Paris Saint-Germain thrashed Madrid 4-0 in the semi-final.

"Things are going to be different... we are starting from scratch," said Alonso, although some of his findings from the tournament will undoubtedly influence his approach.

Madrid fans also got their first glimpse of the Basque tactician's plans, and also of England defender Trent Alexander-Arnold.

Alonso showed tactical flexibility, utilising both a four-man and three-man defence, where-

as his predecessor Ancelotti tended to stick with four at the back and was criticised for not being adaptive enough in games.

By contrast Alonso was keen to adjust things during matches if he could, including the positioning of his players, and keen to impress on his squad they must all help defensively and with pressing.

"We need and want everyone to defend - the 11 players on the pitch have to be involved defensively," said Alonso during the tournament, asked specifically about star forwards Vinicius Junior and Kylian Mbappe.

"They have to know how we want to press, and without that, things will be very complicated," continued Alonso.

"Vini, Jude (Bellingham), Fede (Valverde), Kylian, those up front, the defence has to push forward too."

Alonso is looking to obtain the balance that Ancelotti failed to achieve last season following Mbappe's arrival from PSG.

(**Supersport**)



Stories by Chris Dlamini

Karate: Zim, SA for STANLIB Champ of Champs

THIS year’s STANLIB Oyama Champ of Champs looks set for some fireworks. If last year’s return of the biggest karate competition domestically was a show-stopper, then the next one could be an even more enthralling spectacle. The STANLIB Eswatini-powered Oyama Kyokushinkaikan Karate International Tournament has over a decade, but was for a handful of years put a halt by Covid-19 pandemic. It made its return late last year at Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini. Neighbours South

Africa (SA) were the only country to join Eswatini, but this term, Zimbabwe is expected to make a comeback as well. “The other big event coming is the STANLIB Champ of Champs at the end of September. This event attracts many from within other styles of karate and international people from KZN, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, as well as Zimbabwe,” announced Oyama Kyokushinkaikan Karate Eswatini (OKKE) Secretary Sensei

Musa Ginindza. He was making his brief address on Saturday after the Oyama Juniors Championships Students at SAGM Primary School in Mbabane. He had just revealed they would also be taking a team to Durban (SA) for the Shihan Sabela Memorial IKO Matsushima Tournament at the end of this month. The Shihan Sabela Tournament used to be called the Jacob Zuma Karate Tournament,

and the former SA president would honour it often times. However, it was renamed in honour of the late Shihan Sabela who played a huge role in SA’s martial arts growth. Meanwhile, it is worth mentioning that Zimbabwe used to present the toughest competition for both Eswatini and SA, with most of their students in their country’s army.



‘Dodge’ uncrowned Billiards Arena Singles League champ

WITH games to spare, the inaugural Billiards and Games Arena Singles League already has its champion. The champion is the renowned star player, Sithembiso ‘Dodge’ Matsebula. Individually, he has one more match to play after going 37 with just two defeats. He currently has 131 points, while second-spot occupant, Nkosi-nathi Hleta, is hugely behind on 93 after 31 games. The math already favours

Matsebula who is now only an uncrowned champion. When the league ends, and the E10 000 prize package is rewarded to deserving winners, he will walk away with the champion’s prize. However, the prize breakdown is yet to be shared by the league management. The 20-man league still has players who have played as less as 25 games without a point. That is the case for the bottom five.

Mula series finals Sunday

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE Mavuso Sports Centre will be the place to be on Sunday for volleyball fanatics. The Eswatini National Volleyball Association (ENVA) will host the finals of the Mula sport series competition featuring males and female’s teams. The action will kick off at 9am with multiple fixtures. The interesting fixtures include the security forces derby between

defending champions Correctional males and Royal Eswatini police service volleyball club. Other matches will be between Correctional Ladies and the capital city side, Scorpions ladies. ENVA vice Secretary Philile Lokotfwako confirmed the fixtures. “We look forward to the exciting fixtures of the Mula Sport series finals, and fans are urged to attend the games in numbers,” she said. Lokotfwako further thanked the sponsor for continued support. “We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which contributes to

the development of the sport in the country,” she said. The domestic competition will help local clubs prepare for international assignments such as the zone vi clubs championships slated for December at Polokwane, South Africa. **The full fixture**
UNESWA vs UEDF Men
REPS vs Zakhlele Women
Tigers’ vs Bob Cats Men
REPS vs Correctional Men
RES Vs Olympia Men
TIGRESS vs UEDF Women
Correctional vs Scorpions Women



▲ Correctional males celebrating their victory during the previous edition of the Mula Sport Series.

ESA congratulates Siwakhile

Stories By Delisa Magagula
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ESWATINI is now represented in the global swimming spheres. This follows the election of Australia-based swimmer Siwakhile Dlamini into World Aquatics. Dlamini was appointed during the World governing body Elective Congress held in Singapore.

She competed at the global showpiece with Chadd Ning. The Eswatini Swimming Association Secretary, Nozipho Mahlalela, said they are happy with Dlamini's latest achievement. "We are proud of Siwakhile's latest appointment and wish her the best of luck in her new responsibility. This achievement has also put Eswatini on the world map, and she will continue being active as a swimmer," she said. Dlamini has joined retired national

sprinter Sibusiso 'Swazi Bolt' Matsenjwa in the list of Emaswati who are serving in the International Sports Commission. Matsenjwa is a member of the World Athletes Forum. Siwakhile is part of the national team to represent the country in the 2025 African Aquatics zone championships to be hosted by Eswatini in September. The national team will be under the guidance of internationally recognised coach Welcome Nhlabatsi.



▲ Local swimmer Siwakhile Dlamini.

EBA /Matsapha boxing club tension escalates

Tension between the Eswatini Boxing Association and the Matsapha Boxing Club has escalated. This comes after the mother body's decision to strip Matsapha boxing club of its membership for alleged non-compliance. The team will be unable to compete in local competition, and its boxers have been granted a grace period to attend domestic competitions until August 31,2025. The decision will affect the club's top boxers, Thabiso Dlamini and Zweli Dlamini, among others. This is according to a correspondence sent to the club by the association vice president, Emmanuel Du Point, also in possession of this publication. The tension started after Matsapha Boxing club chairman Vincent Sihlongonyane was suspended by the congress during the recent

Annual General meeting held at Olymp Africa Centre on June 29,2025. Sihlongonyane has not been charged and has since asked the mother body to furnish him with the necessary evidence that substantiates his suspension. "I acknowledge the resolution passed on June 29, 2025, regarding my suspension from EBA activities, based on alleged 'various acts of misconduct'. I must emphasize that the phrase 'various acts of misconduct' is unacceptably vague and prevents me from adequately addressing the reasons for my suspension. To respond appropriately to this resolution, I demand a comprehensive list of each specific act of misconduct that I am alleged to have committed. This list must include dates, times, locations, and a detailed description of each alleged action," he said.



▲ Matsapha Boxing club Chairman Vincent Sihlongonyane.



▲ Riders in action during a local race.

Close to 200 cyclists for 2 fast 2 Furious

A cycling spectacle will unfold this weekend in the country. This will be during the 2025 edition of the 2 Fast 2 Furious Road race to take place on Sunday between the Lukhula -Big Bend Road. The race will feature local and international riders from South Africa and Mozambique. The race will have three categories: 100km,75km, and 25km.

The race organiser, Clinton McNamara, confirmed the news when giving an update on the event. "We are looking forward to the race being attended by local and international riders. We have already received entries from Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal and over 150 riders have registered so far," he said. The seasoned administrator also thanked their main sponsor, Tree Tops Resort, for

their continuous support. The hospitality company has pumped in E100 000 towards this year's edition. "We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which plays a major role in the development of the sport in the country. We further appreciate the guidance from the Eswatini Cycling Association," he said. The race will help two elite female riders, Notsitsekelelo Mdlovu and Mandiswa

Fakudze, prepare for the 2025 World cycling championships set to take place in Kigali, Rwanda. Various local clubs such as Team G, Newcomm Wheels, Darkton Cycling Club, 4eva Cycling Club, Kusekhaya, and MTN Khemani, among others, will take part in the race.

By Sibusiso Masilela
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MBABANE Highlanders AM FC President Shauwn Mkhize has launched a sports tourism event in the country. The flamboyant South African businesswoman will be hosting a weekend gateway in the country between August 29-30, 2025.

The ‘MaMkhize’ weekend experience will see tourists and fans enjoy a local experience of gathering and the beautiful scenery of the country, with a dining experience at Royal villas and Ocean Cuisine restaurant.

She is expected to unveil the team’s new signings, technical bench, and the luxurious Arizcar Bus.

Further details of the initiative will be unpacked in due course.

The former Royal AM Boss announced the latest development on the club’s Facebook page.

“Highlanders, family, the journey begins! As I officially take the reins at Mbabane Highlanders AM FC, I’m inviting all our friends, fans, and loyal supporters from South Africa to join me in Eswatini for a weekend to remember,” she said.

She further revealed that the package for the guests will include match-day tickets for the capital city giants.

“The MaMkhize Weekend Experience curated by Exclusive Travel is your all-access pass to football, luxury, and celebration. Your package includes return flights to Eswatini, two nights at the opulent Royal Villas in Ezulwini, matchday tickets to witness the #BlackBullEnergy Ezimnyama Ngenkani - in action, and entry to the official after-party at Ocean Cuisine in Manzini,” she said.

She is currently facing a court ownership battle against former Boss Bheki ‘Rubber’ Simelane at the high court before Judge Ti-

‘MaMkhize’ launches sports tourism drive



▲ New Mbabane Highlanders president Shauwn Mkhize, son Andile Mpisane and Patrons after her unveiling.

tus Mlangeni.

She has been cited as one of the respondents on the matter with the Patrons, Premier League of Eswatini, and Eswatini Football Association (EFA).

The matter will be back in court on August 21, 2025.

The KwaZulu-Natal-born director is the second South African businessperson to lead

Highlanders after Tshwane-based politician Chief Ally Kgomongwe.

Mkhize is the first female leader of the capital city giants.

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

The late Dlamini oversaw the defunct Red Lions FC.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders AM FC President Shauwn Mkhize has launched a sports tourism event in the country.



Royal Leopard for Mozambique friendly

By Sibusiso Masilela
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ROYAL Leopard have lined up an international friendly match in Mozambique.

This is in preparation for the CAF Confederation cup clash against Namibian side Young Africans between September 21-29, 2025.

The police side Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frank Hurube confirmed the latest news.

“We are working on a friendly match against one of the Mozambique teams, which we will reveal in due course. The match will help us prepare for the continental assign-

ment,” he said.

The police side earned their continental ticket after winning the 2025 SMVAF Ingwenyama cup.

Leopard have concluded the signing of former Mbabane Swallows and Polokwane City striker Mohhamed Anas from Ghana.

‘Ingwemabalabala’ last reached the group stages of the same competition in 2022 under the guidance of current head coach Edwin Matsebula.

The blue and white ensemble is set to receive technical sponsorship from Primo.

They are the fifth local side that is sponsored by Primo, including Mbabane Swallows, Nsingizini Hotspurs, Young Buffaloes, and Ubombo Sugar FC.

Shabashie no longer joining ‘Bull’

By Chris Dlamini

EX-NSINGIZINI Hotspurs midfielder Alvin Shabashie is no longer joining Mbabane Highlanders AM FC.

The Ghanaian midfielder had been strongly linked with the black and gold outfit for a while since his much-publicised transfer from Insingizi Yezulu, as Nsingizini fondly go, at the end of last season. Impeccable sources also linked him with Mbabane Swallows.

Shabashie was one of the players who had travelled to Manzini last Monday after being told they would be travelling to Pietermaritzburg to join the rest of the team in pre-season.

“I was later told we couldn’t go that day before they returned to tell me foreign players would come from South Africa,” said the player.

Shabashie expressed his disappointment, feeling his time was wasted for nothing. Nonetheless, he said he had no choice but to accept the club’s decision.

Questioned about Swallows, he did not deny there was informal interest and communication from one agent to join the red and white outfit in training. It remains to be seen where he ends up, with Manzini Wanderers also back in action this season and looking to have a competitive squad.

However, the maroon and white hub giants have not been in the picture as far as any interest in the Ghanaian is concerned. Shabashie was a key defensive midfielder for Nsingizini last season and contributed to their first-ever MTN Premier League title.



▲ Ex-Nsingizini Hotspurs midfielder Alvin Shabashie is no longer joining Mbabane Highlanders AM FC.



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