



King lauds Japan for growing with Africa

By King's Office Correspondent

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN – His Majesty the King has praised Japan for its development assistance to Africa, particularly Eswatini. He described it as a vital link between the developed nation and the African continent, offering valuable experiences to accelerate national growth ambitions.

Speaking at a bilateral meeting with Japan's Prime Minister, Shigeru Ishiba, yesterday, the discussions centred on strengthening bilateral relations and exploring ways to enhance trade and development.

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Stories By King's Office
Correspondents

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN – His Majesty the King has praised Japan for its development assistance to Africa, particularly Eswatini. He described it as a vital link between the developed nation and the African continent, offering valuable experiences to accelerate national growth ambitions.

Speaking at a bilateral meeting with Japan's Prime Minister, Shigeru Ishiba, yesterday, the discussions centred on strengthening bilateral relations and exploring ways to enhance trade and development.

His Majesty noted that TICAD arrived at an opportune time, as Africa charts its future through Agenda 2063, aimed at creating the 'Africa we want'.

Robust

"Whilst we pursue this continental agenda, each nation has specific goals. Eswatini is striving to improve the lives of all citizens by building a robust social sector," he said.

"We are recovering from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted many economies. Our



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III makes his statement to Japan Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba during the talks as Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Minister Pholile Shakantu, Commerce and Industry Minister Manqoba Khumalo and Ambassadors Menzi Dlamini and Mahlaba Mamba look on.

progress is encouraging, with our economy recently recording an eight per cent GDP growth, with potential for further expansion," he added.

His Majesty expressed Eswatini's gratitude to Japan for its openness to engagement and support, which is crucial for nations striving to grow.

Japan's Prime Minister welcomed His Majesty, expressing his desire to deepen the relationship between the two nations. In a brief statement from Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry, Prime Minister Ishiba, noting His Majesty King Mswati III's sixth TICAD

participation, expressed gratitude for his involvement over more than a quarter of a century.

He emphasised strengthening ties, acknowledging their respective traditions, heritages, and unique cultures.

Prime Minister Ishiba highlighted challenges Japan faces and announced food assistance to address worsening food insecurity caused by drought and other factors. He also affirmed Japan's commitment to supporting youth capacity building through human resource development, for which His Majesty expressed gratitude.

The leaders pledged to collaborate on various international challenges. His Majesty was accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Pholile Shakantu; Natural Resources and Energy Minister, Prince Lonkhokhela; Economic Planning and Development Minister, Dr Tambo Gina; and Commerce, Industry and Trade Minister, Manqoba Khumalo. Also present were Ambassadors Menzi Dlamini, designated to Malaysia, Mahlaba Mamba, designated to the African Union (AU), and the King's Private Secretary, Mbongeni Simelane.



Inkhosikati LaMatsebula visits Japan's ancient Yokohama Strawberry Park

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN – Japan's First Lady, Yoshiko Ishiba, led Inkhosikati LaMatsebula and several spouses of African leaders to the historic Sankeien Garden and Yokohama Strawberry Park for a strawberry-picking experience.

Among the First Ladies were Angola's Ana Afonso Dias Lourenço, Kenya's Rachel Ruto, Mozambique's Gupta Candane Chapo, Cameroon's Felicite Nelly Ngoute, Burundi's Angelina Ndayishimiye, and Dr Max Malumango, spouse of Zambia's Vice President, among others.

Accompanying Inkhosikati was Princess Siphila, the Queen Mother of the Ndzundza Mabhoko clan of Ndebele, a sister to His Majesty the King, who wore a South African Ndebele-inspired outfit.

At Sankeien Garden, Inkhosikati enjoyed a Noh theatre performance of "The Feather Mantle," a tale of a fisherman, Hakuryo, who finds a celestial maiden's robe on a pine branch.

When she pleads for its return to ascend to heaven, he agrees on the condition that she performs a celestial dance, which she does gracefully, portraying the Palace of the Moon, before vanishing into the mist beyond Mount Fuji.

Inkhosikati and the First Ladies were taught to play Noh drums and sing, guided by professional musicians.

Noh, recognised as the world's oldest theatrical tradition and a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, features distinctive masks believed to hold spiritual power, influencing the performer's appearance and inner state.

First Lady Ishiba hosted lunch, introducing the spouses to an excerpt of the Japanese tea ceremony, Sado, where they tasted authentic Matcha tea.

Inkhosikati and the First Ladies then visited Yokohama Strawberry Park to pick strawberries.

Unique to the park, strawberries are carefully grown by individuals with disabilities, guided by cultivation experts.

Inkhosikati LaMatsebula, Princess Siphila and the First Ladies enjoyed picking and tasting the fresh, juicy fruit.

Opened in April 2022, the park aims to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities, fostering their independence and societal participation.

It promotes an inclusive, equitable environment, assessing individuals daily to assign tasks suited to their physical conditions.



▲ Japan's First Lady, Yoshiko Ishiba, led Inkhosikati LaMatsebula and several spouses of African leaders to the historic Sankeien Garden and Yokohama Strawberry Park for a strawberry-picking experience. Princess Siphila, the Queen Mother of the Ndzundza Mabhoko clan of Ndebele also joined Inkhosikati to have a first-hand experience of strawberry harvesting.



By King’s Office Correspondent

Eswatini seeks energy partnerships in Japan

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN – Eswatini is not only aiming to boost trade with Japan but is also seeking partnerships to invest in its energy sector.

In a media interview at the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, highlighted the value of bilateral relations with Japan, which have yielded positive results for Eswatini.

He cited the presence of YKK Zippers, a Japanese multinational operating in Eswatini for half a century. Recently, several Japanese firms, including a tractor manufacturing company, have explored setting up businesses in the kingdom.

The minister said Eswatini’s participation in TICAD 9 involves meetings with potential partners on key development areas, particularly energy supply, a critical need. He noted that Japanese companies could collaborate with the Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC). Natural Resources and Energy Minister, Prince Lonkhokhela, part of the delegation, held talks with these firms, with discussions set to continue.

“We are exploring a public-private partnership model involving our governments and Eswatini’s private sector,” he said. Khumalo added that engagements also focus on developing infrastructure projects under Japan’s development and trade programmes.

“Additionally, we are addressing trade expansion, particularly exports to Japan. Currently, our main export is wood chips from TWK in Pigg’s Peak, Montigny, and Shiselweni Forestry,” he said.



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini with some Cabinet ministers.

The minister noted Japan’s interest in importing anthracite coal from Eswatini, which could open a new market amid challenges in South Africa’s coal sector, where smelters are closing, forcing Maloma, a major Eswatini coal mine, to scale down

and announce retrenchments.

Khumalo stressed that Eswatini is not satisfied with current trade volumes and his ministry is committed to growth.

“His Majesty has tasked us to engage beyond formal meetings with Japan’s

industry leaders. The Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) is showcasing the kingdom’s offerings at a dedicated stand,” he said.

The TICAD 9 Conference concludes tomorrow.

Eswatini seeks new markets to expand tourism horizons

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini has issued a compelling call to action for Eswatini’s hospitality and tourism sectors to forge stronger global partnerships, aiming to unlock exponential economic growth for the Kingdom.

Speaking at the country’s inaugural Tourism Nkwe Conference, the Prime Minister outlined a visionary roadmap that aligns with the government’s broader ambitions for a prosperous and sustainable Eswatini. The conference, organised by the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Eswatini (HOTEAS), brought together industry stakeholders, government officials, and international partners to discuss strategies for elevating Eswatini’s tourism profile on the world stage. Prime Minister Dlamini emphasised that the event reflects the government’s commitment to building “an Eswatini whose populace enjoys wealth and wellbeing,” signalling tourism as a critical driver of national development.

Highlighting the country’s unique assets, the Prime Minister painted a vivid picture of Eswatini’s rich tourism offerings. “Eswatini possesses great tourism potential, from our unsurpassed culture and traditions to our distinct natural landscapes, rich historical heritage, diverse flora and fauna, and spectacular wildlife,” he stated. He described the nation as “a great untold story that the world is dying to experience,” underscoring the opportunity to transform these assets into sustainable economic gains.



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini.

The Prime Minister’s remarks came with a sense of urgency and ambition. He expressed satisfaction that the conference was named the Tourism “Nkwe” Conference, explaining that “Nkwe” is more than a buzzword; it is a call to action and a challenge from the Throne itself.

“Even as we pursue our economic goals, we must not lose sight of the urgency with which we must address the country’s socio-economic challenges. This requires agility and ambition,” he said, framing tourism development as a strategic imperative intertwined with social progress.

The Prime Minister acknowledged the

pivotal role of the hospitality industry and the private sector in driving Eswatini’s development agenda. He called for a unified approach to grow the tourism industry, emphasising that the sector’s diverse facets, including cultural, religious, medicinal, and eco-tourism, offer vast opportunities for economic expansion.

Cognisant

“His Majesty’s Government is cognisant of the important role that the hospitality industry and the private sector in general can play to ensure that we attain our shared goal of a developed country status,” the Prime Minister said. This statement reflects

a collaborative vision where government policies and private enterprise work hand in hand to elevate Eswatini’s global tourism standing.

The PM also addressed the realities of the global tourism market, which is characterised by intense competition. He urged stakeholders to seek partnerships with regional and international tourism organisations that recognise Eswatini’s untapped potential. “We must foster collaboration with regional and international tourism organisations, learning from best practices and forging alliances that open new markets and opportunities,” he emphasised.

This approach advocates for knowledge exchange, strategic alliances, and market diversification as essential tools to position Eswatini competitively on the world tourism map.

Looking ahead, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of empowering the tourism industry through innovative business strategies and infrastructure development. He encouraged exploring a broad spectrum of initiatives, from small, community-led projects to larger-scale ventures, to stimulate inclusive growth.

“The focus today should also be on empowering industry growth. This means exploring innovative strategies for business development, from small, community-led initiatives to larger-scale ventures,” he explained. Furthermore, he called for a critical examination of the country’s infrastructure to ensure it not only meets but exceeds the expectations of modern travellers, recognising that quality infrastructure is a cornerstone of a successful tourism industry.



▲ Embiveni has extended a hand of compassion to vulnerable children through a donation of food and sanitary parcels worth E50 000 to SOS Children's Village in Mbabane.

Embiveni donates food and sanitary parcels worth E50 000 to SOS Children's Village

Stories By Ncaba Ntshakala
ncaban@rubiconmedia.group

EMBIVENI has extended a hand of compassion to vulnerable children through a donation of food and sanitary parcels worth E50 000 to SOS Children's Village in Mbabane.

The event, which took place this week, was attended by senior officials from both Embiveni and SOS Children's Villages Eswatini, which was hailed as it signified a strong partnership aimed at uplifting children and families in need.

Present at the ceremony were Inyatsi Group Holdings Marketing and PR Manager, Ncobile Dlamini, who delivered remarks on behalf of Embiveni Managing Director Phindile Matsebula, SOS Children's Villages National Director Phindile Nhleko-Makama, Programme Director for the Mbabane Village Thokozani Maphalala, as well as Embiveni Marketing Officer Nontsikelelo Dlamini, Quality Assurance Manager Sandile Dlamini and Sales Manager Vusi Gwebu. Welcoming the guests, Nhleko-Makama gave a brief overview of the work carried out by SOS Children's Villages in Eswatini. She explained that the organisation runs customised care interventions designed to transform the lives of children under its care and empower them to become self-reliant and contributing members of society. "We are committed to ensuring that vulnerable families in communities are empowered to become financially independent, creating safe and nurturing spaces for children," she said, noting that such interventions build resilience and dignity for future generations.

Delivering remarks on behalf of Embiveni Managing Director, Ncobile emphasised the company's dedication to supporting the most vulnerable members of society. Quoting His Majesty King Mswati III, she reminded the gathering of the collective duty to care for children and the elderly. "As Embiveni, we align ourselves fully with His Majesty's vision. Our responsibility as a company goes beyond the products we supply. It is to contribute to-



▲ SOS Children's Villages National Director Phindile Nhleko-Makama taking the EMI Team on a tour to one of the Houses.

wards building a stable and First World Eswatini where dignity, compassion, and opportunity are afforded to all," she said.

She further highlighted that Embiveni is guided by values of agility, accountability, teamwork, and commitment, all of which shape its social responsibility agenda. "Businesses must be part of the social fabric of our nation; answering when there is need, supporting when there is vulnerability, and building when there is hope," Ncobile stressed, adding that the company draws inspiration from Inyatsi Group Holdings' ethos of uplifting communities and leaving no one behind.

Following the remarks, Nhleko-Makama applauded Embiveni for the gesture, stating that the partnership will make a meaningful impact on the lives of many children. "This donation will go a long way in meeting the daily needs of children under our care. We value this collaboration because it is through such partnerships that we are able to fulfil our mandate of giving every child the opportunity to thrive," she said. After the official proceedings, the SOS team took Embiveni officials on a guided tour of the Village, including a visit to one of the family houses. This gave Embiveni representatives a first-hand understanding of how the children live and the support structures that sustain them.



▲ Embiveni Marketing Officer Nontsikelelo Dlamini sharing the overview of EMI operations.



▲ Participants following proceedings during the donation.

By Thokozani Mazibuko

Police dismantle fraudulent document syndicate

IN a major breakthrough against financial and economic crimes, the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has dismantled a fraudulent document syndicate operating in Mbabane, arresting five suspects believed to have been behind the illegal enterprise.

The operation, carried out on Wednesday morning, was spearheaded by officers from the Financial and Economic Crimes Unit, who intercepted an office at the Commercial Centre in Mbabane where forged documents were being produced.

According to the Chief Police Information and Communications Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the suspects are aged 23, 39, 44, 49, and 49. Among those arrested is a civil servant who is alleged to be the mastermind behind the syndicate.

“Preliminary investigations reveal that the civil servant had been unlawfully stealing government stationery and official stamps, which were then used to manufacture fraudulent documents, including Vehicle Registration Certificates (Blue Books) and Bail Receipts,” Vilakati disclosed.

The arrests come as part of the police’s ongoing crackdown on syndicates that threaten the credibility of national institutions. The suspects are expected to appear in court soon, where they will face charges linked to fraud and forgery.

Vilakati emphasized that the operation underscores the police’s commitment to protecting the integrity of public offices and

ensuring that those who exploit official resources for criminal gain are brought to justice.

“The Royal Eswatini Police Service further urges members of the public to remain alert and report any suspicious activity to their nearest police station,” she said.

The case has raised concerns about the misuse of government resources, particularly with reports that official stamps and stationery were central to the scam. Analysts have noted that such fraudulent activities not only cost the government financially but also erode public trust in essential services such as vehicle registration and court processes.

The swift action by the police has been welcomed by many, with hopes that it will send a strong message to other potential offenders involved in white-collar crime.

As investigations continue, more arrests have not been ruled out, and the police are expected to intensify monitoring and enforcement in key government offices where sensitive documentation is processed.



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IFMS to shut the door on corruption – Minister Neal

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

MINISTER of Finance Neal Rijkenberg has assured Senators and the nation that the government’s forthcoming Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) will bring unprecedented transparency to public finances and decisively curb corruption in procurement.

Speaking during Thursday’s Sitting of the Senate, Rijkenberg emphasized that the digital system will overhaul how government manages its financial transactions, making it virtually impossible for corrupt practices to thrive.

“Transparency which will be provided by IFMS will give no room to corruption,” the Minister declared. He explained that the slow, paper-driven systems currently in use have created loopholes that dishonest individuals exploit. By contrast, the IFMS will digitize, centralize, and track all procurement and financial operations in real time.

The Senate debate was sparked by ongoing concerns about questionable drug procurement processes in the Ministry of Health, with Senators warning that corruption in the sector undermines the delivery of essential medicines to citizens. Senator Isaac Mmemo Magagula, who originally tabled Motion No. 4 of 2025 on procurement reforms, pressed the Minister to outline immediate measures to plug the leaks.

While acknowledging the challenges, Rijkenberg reassured Senators that the

IFMS project is on track. He said the government is also drafting legislation that will accompany the system to strengthen accountability. “The law that’s coming is to ensure transparency, and once we ensure transparency, we address corruption,” he said.

According to the Minister, government has set April 2026 as the target date for the system to go live, marking what he described as “a new era of financial discipline and accountability.”

The IFMS is expected to integrate all critical aspects of public finance management, including budget preparation, expenditure tracking, payroll, procurement, and reporting. Once operational, it will allow Parliament, oversight institutions, and the public to monitor government spending with precision and speed.

Senators, however, stressed the urgency of addressing corruption in the short term, particularly within the Ministry of Health. They warned that citizens cannot afford to wait until 2026 while funds continue to leak through fraudulent procurement practices.

Despite these concerns, Rijkenberg urged lawmakers to stand with government in implementing reforms that will have a lasting impact. “Stand with us to stop corruption,” he said. “Help us to catch corrupt individuals and entities, as it is unacceptable.”

The announcement comes at a time when the public is demanding stronger accountability and effective measures to restore confidence in the country’s financial systems. If successfully implemented, the IFMS could mark a turning point in the fight against corruption in Eswatini.

Minister promises that IFMS will be applied in next financial year

THE issue of corruption in government procurement, particularly in the Ministry of Health, came under sharp focus in the Senate this week, as legislators expressed deep concern about persistent irregularities in the acquisition of essential drugs.

The debate unfolded during Thursday’s Sitting of the Senate where Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg tabled a response to Motion No. 4 of 2025, initially moved by Senator Isaac Mmemo Magagula.

Senator Magagula did not mince his words, reiterating his frustration with what he termed a “culture of elusive corruption” in public procurement. “I am very happy with transparency. The Minister of Finance has responded to my motion,” Magagula began, before turning to the substance of his concerns.

“The procurement of drugs is still questionable, especially the procurement of drugs,” he said. “While we wait for the Government of Rwanda to assist in strengthening procurement legislation, corruption is continuing. What do we do now to stop this corruption?”

Magagula lamented that some of the individuals responsible for the irregularities seem untouchable. “Bobhabuli are very illusive and are not arrestable... they should be arrested immediately. This corruption needs to be stopped urgently,” he charged. He further pressed government to prioritize financial allocations to the Ministry of Health, warning that citizens’ lives were at risk due to delays in accessing vital medicines. “We need money now to assist the Ministry of Health,” Magagula added.

In his response, Finance Minister Neal Rijkenberg acknowledged the challenges but defended the government’s financial

systems. “The system works and it’s not broken, but it is slow,” he said. “The longer the process takes, the more it gives room to corruption. But the IFMS System will ensure that the procurement process is fast, precise, and accurate.”

The Minister highlighted that the upcoming 7Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS), a modern digital platform for financial management, would be a game-changer in plugging loopholes. “The law that’s coming is to ensure transparency, and once we ensure transparency, we address corruption. Stand with us to stop corruption. Help us to catch corrupt individuals and entities, as it is unacceptable,” Rijkenberg told the Senate.

He went further to outline government’s roadmap, noting that Eswatini has set April 2026 as the target date to roll out the IFMS system alongside the relevant legislation. “April 2026 we have an ambition to go live with the IFMS System with the relevant legislation,” the Minister confirmed.

The heated debate reflects mounting public pressure for government to tighten oversight in procurement, especially in the health sector, where shortages of essential drugs have often been blamed on inefficiencies and corruption. Legislators are calling for urgent interventions to ensure accountability, while the Ministry of Finance maintains that systemic reforms already in motion will deliver lasting solutions.

It should be noted that as the countdown to April 2026 begins, expectations will be high for the IFMS to restore trust in public procurement and close the loopholes that have long enabled corruption. Until then, however, the Senate remains adamant that action must be taken to safeguard public funds and, more importantly, to protect the health and wellbeing of emaSwati.

EswatiniMed Court Case:

Three pending matters removed from Court roll

Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE Supreme Court granted Eswatini Medical Aid (EswatiniMed) an application to have three pending appeal matters temporarily removed from the court roll.

The company approached the court seeking to consolidate the matters before a single bench, citing duplication and the risk of conflicting rulings.

Some of the appeals include Case No. 26/2025, in which the national police commissioner had been cited. EswatiniMed argued that separating the hearings would prejudice its case and lead to unnecessary costs. The bench ruled in its favour, ordering that the appeals be removed pending consolidation. No dates were set for re-enrolment



▲ EswatiniMed Principal Officer Peter Simelane.

Do not beg for love – Principal Magistrate

“SEKUTE imphilo lakhaya. Why don’t you get a divorce? Depression is deadly and no one can fix the mind once it has been damaged.”

These sentiments were made by the Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi after a woman appeared before the Mbabane Magistrates Court for damaging her husband’s clothes worth E12 120.

Nontobeko Langa (40) was charged with contravening Section 77 of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018 after she allegedly used a pair of scissors to destroy her husband’s clothing during a domestic dispute.

When questioned by the presiding

magistrate why she committed the offence, Langa explained that she acted out of anger after a painful confrontation.

“My husband’s girlfriend called me and insulted me over the phone. She even told me they had a child together,” Langa said.

She added that what hurt her most was that her husband allegedly called her using the mistress’s number, which pushed her into depression.

Regret

“I regret what I did because it was out of anger,” she told the court. Magistrate Nhlabatsi ordered that Langa’s husband, Phesheya Muhammad, be brought before the court.

Upon his arrival, the magistrate directly asked if it was true that he had a mistress and stayed away from home. Muhammad responded by stating that what was more painful was that his wife also left the house without informing him of her whereabouts,” he said. This prompted Nhlabatsi to openly address the couple, questioning why they were still in the marriage.

“Sekute imphilo lakhaya. Why don’t you divorce? Depression is deadly and no one can fix the mind once it has been damaged,” she warned. The Principal Magistrate told the couple that their toxic relationship was not only damaging to themselves but also to their children. “You are raising children who will become bullies because they come from broken homes,” she cautioned.

She further reminded Muhammad that a wedding certificate was only a paper, stressing that what truly mattered was love, care, and mutual respect.

“To you Muhammad, your wife’s name and reputation are being dragged through the mud. Your dignity is gone, and you are pushing yourself into an early grave. If you cannot be the man in this marriage, just set her free,” she said. The magistrate lamented that the country required “real men” who could take care of their wives and families.

“The country is lacking men, not boys. We need men who understand responsibility and family values,” she said firmly.

In mitigation, Langa apologised to her husband and pleaded for leniency, promising to seek counselling. Magistrate Nhlabatsi, however, advised her that the first step to healing was to learn to speak to herself and decide what she truly wanted in life. She also warned Muhammad against subjecting his wife to financial abuse, noting allegations that he often left the home without providing food. Muhammad disputed the claims, to which the magistrate responded, In the end, Langa was sentenced to five years imprisonment with an option of E5 000 fine. However, the sentence was suspended for three years on condition that she does not commit a similar offence within that period.



Murder accused gets 9 years, no fine

HIGH Court Judge Bonginkosi Magagula has sentenced Simanga Nkambule to nine years in prison for the fatal stabbing of Siyabonga Mamba.

The sentence, delivered on Tuesday, August 19, carries no option of a fine, with time already spent in custody to be considered.

According to the judgment, Nkambule was initially charged with murder following the November 26, 2022 incident. At the start of the trial, he pleaded not guilty to murder but admitted to culpable homicide.

His defence counsel confirmed the plea, which was later accepted by the Crown. A statement of agreed facts, signed by all parties, was admitted into evidence.

The court heard that Nkambule, the deceased, and others were drinking at Phola Wine and Malt on the night of the incident.

A quarrel broke out between Nkambule and Mamba but was diffused by a witness, Mlungisi Mngometulu. Nkambule left for his nearby flat before returning to the area where the deceased and others stood.

Witness testimony indicated that Nkambule drew a screwdriver and stabbed Mngometulu on the back, causing him to fall. He then stabbed Mamba in the chest before fleeing, dropping the weapon on the ground.

Judgment

Witnesses rushed both victims to Sithobelweni Health Centre. The court heard that Mamba, who was bleeding heavily from the chest and mouth, died on the way to the hospital.

In delivering his judgment, Judge Magagula said the accused’s actions showed extreme recklessness and disregard for human life. He noted that while Nkambule may not have had clear criminal intent, his conduct was on “the higher end of recklessness and irresponsible conduct.”

The judge emphasised that the seriousness of the offence warranted a custodial sentence, stating that the loss of life occurred under avoidable circumstances. Nkambule was sentenced to nine years’ imprisonment for culpable homicide, with no option of a fine.

● Nkambule was initially charged with murder following the November 26, 2022 incident. At the start of the trial, he pleaded not guilty to murder but admitted to culpable homicide.

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BRIEFS

Shoprite's Checkers trials high-tech trolleys

SHOPPERS at Checkers supermarkets in South Africa could soon be cruising the aisles with “smart” trolleys that let them know how much money they are spending and include in-built payment terminals, the chain’s owner Shoprite said. Similar high-tech shopping trolleys have been rolled out or piloted in other countries including Chile via Walmart and the U.S. and Australia through Coles but this is the first time they are being trialled in South Africa.

Oil extends gains amid signs of strong demand

Oil prices rose on Thursday, bolstered by signs of strong demand in the United States, with uncertainty over efforts to end the war in Ukraine also lending support. Brent crude futures were close to a two-week high and up 46 cents, or 0.7%, to \$67.30 a barrel at 0817 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 50 cents, or 0.8%, to \$63.21 a barrel.

Kenya gets \$169 million in Samurai financing

JAPAN will provide up to 25 billion yen (\$169.42 million) in Samurai financing to Kenya that will be directed towards boosting the East African nation’s vehicle assembly and energy sectors, officials said on Thursday. The agreement was signed by Kenyan Foreign Affairs Minister Musalia Mudavadi and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance CEO Atsuo Kuroda during the TICAD 9, attended by Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Kenyan President William Ruto. (Reuters)

EswatiniBank		
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	



‘Sin Tax’ to promote local industry

THE Minister of Finance, Neal Rijkenberg, has announced the introduction of the Alcohol and Tobacco Levy, a new fiscal measure that will take effect on September 1, 2025.

By Delisa Magagula

The levy, passed into law through the Alcohol and Tobacco Act, increases taxes on imported alcohol and tobacco products while leaving local alcohol production largely unaffected. The policy, according to the Minister, is designed to address multiple objectives which include safeguarding public health, reducing the social and economic costs of alcohol and tobacco consumption, and at the same time promoting Eswatini’s domestic alcohol industry. Rijkenberg emphasized that the government’s overall strategy is not to increase general taxation. Instead, it seeks to maintain or even lower taxes on industries that have potential to grow the economy and create jobs.

“As a country we are trying to not actually increase taxes. We are trying to keep the taxes either the same or even reduce them for certain industries to grow the economy and keep more money in people’s pockets,” he said. The levy, however, falls under the category of ‘sin tax,’ applied to discourage harmful consumption patterns. “The cost of drunken driving, smoking, and the resulting health problems does actually cost everybody else. It costs more in hospitals, it costs more on the roads, and these are social costs the country carries,” the Minister explained.

Beverages

One of the most notable changes is the increase in import tax on alcoholic beverages. Previously set at 7%, the levy on imported alcohol has been increased to 10%. The Minister clarified that locally produced alcohol remains taxed at 2%, unchanged from previous years. This differential is intended to give local producers a competitive edge, strengthening Eswatini’s ability to create value-added products from domestic resources.

“For example, if one used to pay E100 for an imported bottle of whiskey, one will now pay E103. It’s an extra E3 per E100,” Rijkenberg explained. Worth mentioning the government hopes this measure will encourage consumers to choose locally produced brands over imported alternatives.

Eswatini already has a well-established brewing industry, and in recent years, more producers have entered the market with new brands.

“Just last week, the sugar industry launched a new brand of rum. Producing our own branded products can boost the industry, create jobs, and promote exports,” he said.

The levy also applies to tobacco, though in a slightly different form. Unlike alcohol, tobacco is not produced in Eswatini, meaning the new tax applies across the board to all imports.

Previously, imported tobacco was taxed at 7%. This has now been raised to 12%, representing a 5% increase.

“If a box of cigarettes cost E100, it will now cost E105 under the new levy,” Rijkenberg explained.



▲ Minister of Finance, Neal Rijkenberg.



▲ The levy, passed into law through the Alcohol and Tobacco Act, increases taxes on imported alcohol and tobacco products while leaving local alcohol production largely unaffected.

In addition he said, this increase will discourage tobacco consumption while also helping to address the health burden associated with smoking.”

The new levy officially comes into effect on September 1, 2025.

From this date, consumers purchasing imported alcohol and tobacco products will immediately experience the price increases.

The Minister cautioned that individuals who frequently purchase imported beverages or tobacco will be directly affected.

However, those who consume locally produced alcohol will not see changes in pricing.

Beyond fiscal policy, the levy is grounded in broader public health concerns. Alcohol and tobacco are widely recognized as leading contributors to health complications and social costs worldwide.

Excessive drinking contributes to traffic accidents, crime, and lost productivity, while tobacco is associated with chronic diseases such as emphysema, cancer, and cardiovascular problems.

By raising prices, the government hopes to discourage overconsumption, particularly among vulnerable populations.

“Having a little bit of alcohol is probably not a problem, but having too much is. Both alcohol and tobacco are addictive, and addictions have a very negative impact on one’s well-being,” Rijkenberg stated.

The Minister acknowledged that overcoming

addiction is difficult, often requiring external support.

While the levy itself cannot eliminate harmful habits, it is intended to reduce accessibility and encourage healthier lifestyle choices among citizens.

A central feature of the new policy is its implicit support for local alcohol brands. By maintaining a lower tax rate on domestically produced alcohol, government signals its intention to nurture local industries.

Eswatini’s breweries and new producers of spirits are already adding value to local agricultural products, such as sugar.

Encouraging domestic consumption of these products could open further export opportunities and generate employment.

The Minister positioned this as part of a broader economic strategy to reduce reliance on imports and build resilience in the local economy.

“Producing our own alcohol branded products is something we will promote, as it boosts the industry and helps grow jobs,” he said.

In closing, Rijkenberg urged citizens to reflect on their consumption habits. While acknowledging that moderate consumption may not pose immediate problems, he highlighted the dangers of overindulgence.

“Those who are addicted need to make the decision to seek help. There is support available to overcome addictions, but it begins with that first step,” he said.

The Alcohol and Tobacco Levy is thus positioned as a policy tool that serves multiple purposes, discouraging harmful consumption, reducing public health costs, raising targeted government revenue, and promoting Eswatini’s domestic alcohol industry.

As of September, consumers will have to make choices at the shelves either absorb the extra cost of imported products or turn toward local brands that remain unaffected by the tax increase.

For government, the measure is expected to strike a balance between fiscal prudence, public health protection, and economic development.

Stories By Delisa Magagula

FNB Eswatini to offer free SME support at EITF 2025



▲ Dlalile Matsebula from FNB touring the Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Square.

FNB Eswatini has once again stepped forward to support the backbone of the local economy Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by announcing that it will offer a wide range of free business advice and practical support during the 2025 Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF).

The bank, together with its subsidiary WesBank, recently confirmed a sponsorship package valued at E430, 000 towards this year's edition of the trade fair.

The sponsorship not only underscores the bank's commitment to the event, which is Eswatini's premier business and trade showcase, but also signals a deliberate investment in empowering the country's SME sector.

As part of its EITF programme, FNB will host two high-impact seminars dedicated to entrepreneurs and farmers.

The first seminar, titled 'Thriving in the Digital Age: Help that Works for Overcoming the SME Challenge' focusing on practical tools and strategies to help their business thrive, will take place on Friday, September 5 at the FNB business chamber in pavilion.

The second seminar, 'Equipping Agribusinesses to thrive in the Digital Age' will be held at the EITF Seminar Hall on the same day.

With agriculture employing a significant portion of the population, this session aims to modernize and digitalize agribusiness operations, giving farmers and Agric-entrepreneurs new tools to enhance productivity and market access.

Both seminars will be free and open to all SMEs in the Kingdom, signalling inclusivity and accessibility.

Explaining the motivation behind these initiatives, Chantell Littler, FNB's Executive Head of Commercial Banking, said the bank is committed to creating platforms that address the real and pressing challenges faced by small businesses.

"As we have been saying throughout this year as we celebrate 30 years of serving the country, *Sitintile Eswatini futsi asiyndzawo*, the success of Eswatini's businesses bodes well for all of us, hence we are making this investment," Littler said.

She emphasized that the seminars are not meant to be academic or abstract. Instead, they will deliver actionable strategies to address common business challenges and unlock new opportunities, because when businesses gain knowledge, they gain the skillset to grow sustainably.

Littler also highlighted that FNB will use the platform to guide entrepreneurs on accessing the bank's range of financial solutions from trade finance and investment options to tools for effective business management which could ultimately enhance their ability to access credit.

Beyond the seminars, FNB will run daily free business clinics throughout the duration of the Trade Fair.

At these clinics, entrepreneurs will be able to sit down with professional FNB Relationship Managers for one-on-one sessions.

Business owners will walk away with a free SME toolkit that includes:

- Profit and loss templates
- Balance sheet templates
- A financial calculator
- Business plan templates
- Cash flow projection tools
- Credit scoring guidance to improve their chances of accessing funding

"These clinics are not sales pitches. They

are practical, solution-driven sessions designed to strengthen businesses so that they can survive unexpected shocks, grow steadily, and contribute meaningfully to Eswatini's economy," Littler explained.

She further stressed that entrepreneurial success begins with access to knowledge, tools, and mentorship.

FNB's goal, she added, is to ensure that business owners do not leave the trade fair empty-handed, but with something tangible that they can apply directly to their enterprises.

Another highlight of the bank's support at the Trade Fair is its continued partnership with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, under which FNB will sponsor exhibition space for selected for the Entrepreneur of the Year Awards (EYA) 2025 Regional Finalists.

These finalists will showcase their products and services at a dedicated space known as the EYA Square.

The initiative gives rising entrepreneurs exposure to broader markets and potential clients they would otherwise struggle to access.

One such beneficiary, Dlalile Matsebula, a handicraft entrepreneur based at the Manzini Market, shared her experience from the 2024 edition:

"It helped me a lot. Even today, I have customers that I met at the EYA Square last year and we have been working together ever since. One of the biggest things you get there is the exposure to a lot of potential customers. Even if your stock runs out, you are still able to share your information with potential customers," Matsebula said.

The bank's interventions could not come at a better time. SMEs in Eswatini are estimated to contribute close to 40% of the country's GDP and provide livelihoods to thousands of families.

However, the sector faces persistent challenges such as limited access to finance, poor record-keeping, inadequate business planning, and a lack of digital adoption.

By creating free, practical, and accessible



▲ Dlalile Matsebula at the EYA Square.

opportunities for knowledge-sharing, FNB Eswatini is positioning itself as not just a financial institution, but as a long-term partner for the growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Worth mentioning is that, the Eswatini International Trade Fair 2025 will run from August 29 –September 7 at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre in Manzini.

The event, which has historically attracted thousands of exhibitors and visitors, will once again serve as a hub for trade, innovation, and networking opportunities.

With FNB's expanded package of SME support, this year's edition promises to be particularly rewarding for local entrepreneurs seeking to learn, network, and grow.

“As we have been saying throughout this year as we celebrate 30 years of serving the country, *Sitintile Eswatini futsi asiyndzawo*, the success of Eswatini's businesses bodes well for all of us, hence we are making this investment.”

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▲ A model poses with a Checkers smart trolley, called the Xpress Trolley, in Cape Town, South Africa. Checkers shoppers may soon use the “smart” trolley, which tracks a running total and allows payment directly on the trolley, Shoprite said on Tuesday.

Shoprite’s Checkers trials high-tech shopping trolleys

SHOPPERS at Checkers supermarkets in South Africa could soon be cruising the aisles with “smart” trolleys that let them know how much money they are spending and include in-built payment terminals, the chain’s owner Shoprite

said.

Similar high-tech shopping trolleys have been rolled out or piloted in other countries including Chile via Walmart and the U.S. and Australia through Coles but this is the first time they are being trialled in South Africa.



The pilot comes as Shoprite’s upscale Checkers chain ramps up its challenge to Woolworths for South Africa’s mid-to-affluent consumers in the lucrative upmarket retail space.

The two retailers have been investing heavily in sleek store designs, cutting-edge retail technology and premium product lines. Following initial testing by office employees at a Checkers supermarket in Cape Town from mid-August, 20 of the new trolleys will be made available to customers at

two of the chain’s stores, Shoprite said in a statement on Wednesday, without saying how much it had invested. Called the Xpress Trolley, the shopping cart lets shoppers scan items as they go, track a running total on a digital screen and pay directly on the trolley without needing to queue at a check-out. The screen also assists with in-store navigation. Shoprite said the trial was part of its strategy “to become South Africa’s most profitable and seamless omnichannel retailer”.

(Reuters)



▲ Brent crude futures were close to a two-week high and up 46 cents, or 0.7%, to \$67.30 a barrel at 0817 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose 50 cents, or 0.8%, to \$63.21 a barrel.

Oil extends gains amid signs of strong demand

OIL prices rose on Thursday, bolstered by signs of strong demand in the United States, with uncertainty over efforts to end the war in Ukraine also lending support.

Brent crude futures were close to a two-week high and up 46 cents, or 0.7%, to \$67.30 a barrel at 0817 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 50 cents, or 0.8%, to \$63.21 a barrel.

Both contracts climbed over 1% in the prior session.

Russia said on Wednesday that attempts to resolve security issues relating to Ukraine over the war without Moscow’s participation were a “road to nowhere”.

“If the White House’s efforts do result in a halt to hostilities in Ukraine, and Russia gradually coming back into the international fold, it will be bearish for the crude market. But for now the Brent price floor to watch out for remains at \$65 a barrel,” said

independent analyst Gaurav Sharma.

U.S. President Donald Trump has announced an additional tariff of 25% on Indian goods from August 27 because of India’s Russian crude purchases, which make up for nearly 35% of its overall oil imports.

Russian embassy officials in New Delhi said on Wednesday Moscow expects to continue supplying oil to India despite warnings from the United States.

Given uncertainty over progress towards ending the war in Ukraine, the possibility of tighter sanctions on Russia has resurfaced, which led to bullish sentiment among traders, said Tamas Varga, an analyst at PVM Oil Associates.

Meanwhile, U.S. crude inventories fell by 6 million barrels last week to 420.7 million barrels, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said on Wednesday, against expectations in a Reuters poll for a 1.8 million-barrel draw.

Kenya gets \$169 million in Japan Samurai financing to boost industries

JAPAN will provide up to 25 billion yen (\$169.42 million) in Samurai financing to Kenya that will be directed towards boosting the East African nation’s vehicle assembly and energy sectors, officials said on Thursday.

The agreement was signed by Kenyan Foreign Affairs Minister Musalia Mudavadi and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance CEO Atsuo Kuroda during the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), attended by Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Kenyan President William Ruto.

“This facility will strengthen our local vehicle assembly and parts manufacturing industry while also addressing electricity transmission and distribution losses, currently standing at about 23% of our national output,” Mudavadi said in a post on X.

The announcement followed the signing of a term sheet on Wednesday for a yen-denominated loan to Kenya backed by NEXI. Japan’s foreign ministry confirmed the loan will be NEXI-guaranteed, a structure designed to lower sovereign funding costs, although specific terms were not disclosed.

Kenya, East Africa’s largest economy, has been diversifying its funding sources at a time of global market volatility and higher U.S. interest rates.

Speaking on the sidelines at TICAD on Thursday, Raphael Otieno, Kenya’s director-general of debt management in the ministry of finance, said Nairobi’s debt strategy is shifting focus from short-term refinancing risks to addressing high borrowing costs.

“The cost of our debt is very, very high,” he said during a panel discussion, noting that Kenya is exploring sustainability-linked bonds with guarantees, yen-denominated “Samurai” bonds, renminbi-denominated “Panda” bonds, and debt swaps to reduce expensive obligations.

He added that the Treasury recently prepaid some domestic bonds and plans further such operations.

When asked whether future yen- or renminbi-linked borrowings would be hedged, Otieno said the exposures would remain unhedged for now, but would be monitored as part of Kenya’s annual debt-management strategy.

(Reuters)



▲ Kenyan Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi attends the United Nations climate change conference COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Russia orders MAX messenger app pre-installed on phones, tablets

MOSCOW - A Russian state-backed messenger application called MAX, a rival to WhatsApp that critics say could be used to track users, must be pre-installed on all mobile phones and tablets from next month, the Russian government said on Thursday.

The decision to promote MAX comes as Moscow is seeking greater control over the internet space as it is locked in a standoff with the West over Ukraine, which it casts as part of an attempt to shape a new world order.

Learn about the latest breakthroughs in AI and tech with the Reuters Artificial Intelligencer newsletter. Sign up here.

The Russian government said in a statement that MAX, which will be integrated with government services, would be on a list of mandatory pre-installed apps on all “gadgets,” including mobile phones and tablets, sold in Russia from September 1.

State media says accusations from Kremlin critics that MAX is a spying app are false and that it has fewer permissions to access user data than rivals WhatsApp and Telegram.

It will also be mandatory that from September 1, Russia’s domestic app store, RuStore, which is pre-installed on all Android devices, will be pre-installed on Apple devices.

A Russian-language TV app called LIME HD TV, which allows people to watch state TV channels for free, will be pre-installed on all smart TVs sold in Russia from January 1, the government added.

The push to promote homegrown apps comes after Russia said this month it had started restricting some calls on WhatsApp, owned by Meta Platforms (META.O), opens new tab, and on Telegram, accusing the



▲ A keyboard is placed in front of a displayed WhatsApp logo in this illustration.

foreign-owned platforms of failing to share information with law enforcement in fraud and terrorism cases.

WhatsApp, which in July had a reach of 97.3 million in Russia, responded by accusing Moscow of trying to block Russians from accessing secure communications, while Telegram, which had a reach of 90.8 million users, said it actively combats the harmful use of its platform.

The third most popular messenger app in July, according to Mediascope data, was VK Messenger at 17.9 million people, an offering from the same state-controlled tech

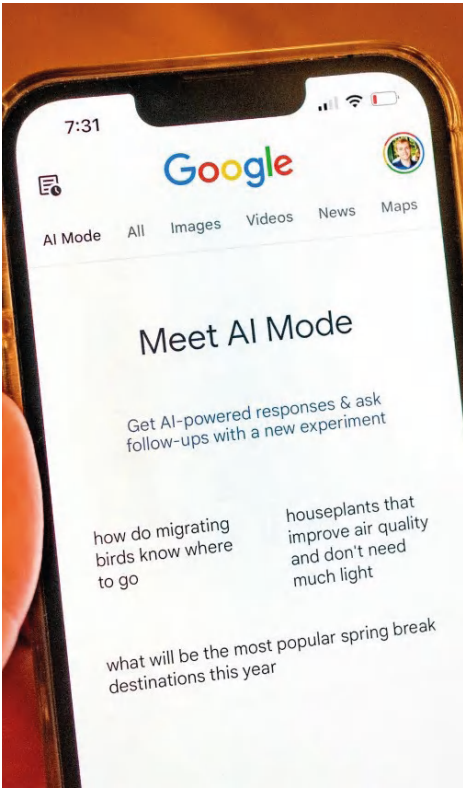
company VK (VKCO.MM), opens new tab which developed MAX.

MAX said this week that 18 million users had downloaded its app, parts of which are still in a testing phase.

Talk show host Jimmy Fallon joined company Vice President Rick Osterloh on stage Wednesday for the launch of the products:

Russia’s interior ministry said on Wednesday that MAX was safer than foreign rivals, but that it had arrested a suspect in the first fraud case using the new messenger.

Reuters



Google’s AI Mode expands globally, adds new agentic features

GOOGLE is launching a global expansion of AI Mode, its feature that allows users to ask complex questions and follow-ups to dig deeper on a topic directly within Search, the company announced on Thursday. The tech giant is also bringing new agentic and personalized capabilities to the feature.

As part of the expansion, Google is bringing AI Mode to 180 new countries in English. Up until now, it’s only been available to users in the U.S., U.K., and India. Google plans to bring the feature to more languages and regions soon.

In terms of the new agentic features, users can now use AI Mode to find restaurant reservations, and in the future, they’ll be able to find local service appointments and event tickets. Users can request dinner reservations based on multiple preferences, such as party size, date, time, location, and preferred cuisine. AI Mode will then search across different reservation platforms to find real-time availability for restaurants that match the inquiry. It then surfaces a curated list of options to choose from.

Capability

This new capability is rolling out for Google AI Ultra subscribers in the U.S. through the “Agentic capabilities in AI Mode” experiment in Labs, Google’s experimental arm. (Ultra is Google’s highest-end plan, at \$249.99 per month.)

Google says that U.S. users in the AI Mode experiment will also now see search results tailored to their individual preferences and interests. The tech giant is starting with dining-related topics for this capability.

For example, if someone searches, “I only have an hour, need a quick lunch spot, any suggestions?” AI Mode will use their past conversations, along with places they’ve searched for or clicked on in Search and Maps, to offer more relevant suggestions. So, if AI Mode infers that you like Italian food and places with outdoor seating, you’ll get results suggesting options with these preferences.

Google notes that users can adjust their personalization settings in their Google Account.

TechCrunch

Meta hitting pause on AI hiring after its poaching spree

META has frozen hiring in its AI organization after restructuring the unit earlier this week, reports The Wall Street Journal.

The hiring freeze follows weeks of poaching more than 50 AI researchers and engineers from competitors.

The freeze went into effect last week, and it’s not clear how long it will last. Meta is still likely working through its reorg, which split its AI unit, Meta Superintelligence Labs, into four new groups: TBD Labs, run by former Scale AI founder Alexandr Wang, and three groups focused on research, product integration, and infrastructure, respectively.

Meta confirmed the hiring freeze with The Journal, saying it was “basic organizational planning...after bringing people on board and undertaking yearly budgeting and planning exercises.”

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s push to get ahead in the AI race has sparked serious talent wars. He’s personally called top researchers and engineers to offer them pay packages worth nine figures, and acquired either other startups or their leadership. Analysts have warned that the rise of stock-based compensation costs could threaten shareholder returns.

TechCrunch



Telefonica renewed one Huawei 5G contract in Spain until 2030

MADRID - Telefonica (TEF.MC), opens new tab renewed a contract with Chinese manufacturer Huawei (HWT.UL) to supply equipment for its 5G mobile core network for retail customers in Spain until 2030, El Pais newspaper reported on Thursday, citing unnamed industry sources.

Telefonica renewed that contract in late 2024 and, in early 2025, it awarded to rival manufacturer Nokia (NOKIA.HE), opens new tab a contract for 5G core for its service to companies and government institutions, El Pais said.

Telefonica’s Chief Operating Officer

Emilio Gayo told Reuters last month that the company was “reducing its exposure to Huawei” in Spain to comply with EU recommendations to telecom operators to phase out Huawei-made devices over concerns they pose a potential security risk.

A spokesperson for Telefonica said the company would not comment on individual contracts and Gayo did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Huawei declined to comment.

Some European countries, including Germany, have passed outright bans on the use of Huawei gear, while Spain has not.

Reuters

Mali's former PM charged with embezzlement, remanded in custody

MALI'S former prime minister, Choguel Maiga, has been charged with embezzlement and remanded in custody as the West African country's military leaders intensify a crackdown over allegations of a coup plot.

The charges against Maiga were revealed on Tuesday following a hearing before Mali's Supreme Court. Maiga, who took office after a second coup in Mali in 2021, was sacked in November 2024 after he publicly denounced the military for a lack of clarity over when it would hand over power to a civilian government.

Maiga's lawyer, Cheick Oumar Konare, told the AFP news agency that no date has yet been set for the former leader's trial.

"We believe in justice, we are calm while awaiting the trial," Konare said, explaining that Maiga would remain in prison for the trial. A statement from the public prosecutor said the charges against Maiga involve "money laundering equal to many billions of CFA francs", or several million US dollars.



▲ Mali's former prime minister, Choguel Maiga, has been charged with embezzlement and remanded in custody.

The former prime minister was arrested one week ago, according to the AFP, days after Mali's military leaders carried out dozens of arrests to quash an alleged plot within the army's ranks to topple the government in turn.

Nine of Maiga's colleagues from his time as prime minister also appeared before the court on Tuesday, with two being charged, some acquitted and others still awaiting their hearing, the AFP reported, citing a judicial source. Earlier this month, another former prime minister, Moussa Mara, was im-

prisoned after tweeting his support for jailed critics of the military. Mali has been gripped by a security crisis since 2012, driven by violence from armed groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and the ISIL (ISIS) group, as well as local criminal gangs. The fighting has resulted in thousands of deaths, while up to 350,000 people are currently displaced, according to Human Rights Watch. The crisis set off mass protests in 2020, paving the way for the military to topple the country's elected government in a coup.

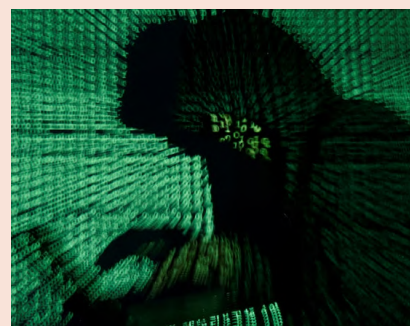
The military briefly ceded power to a transitional govern-

ment but took over in a second coup in 2021.

The colonel who led the two power grabs, Assimi Goita, was also sworn in as transitional president that year. Under his government, the military has reneged on pledges to hand back power to civilians by the end of March 2024, and has tightened its grip on power by dissolving all political parties, and jailing dissidents and leading civil society figures. In July, the military-appointed legislative body also passed legislation that granted Goita a five-year presidential mandate, renewable "as many times as necessary" and without elections.

Maiga was one of the leaders of the protests that helped topple Mali's civilian government in 2020, and previously said he believed the military would safeguard the country's democracy. "We must refound the Malian state, so that no political power can ever again create the conditions for a return to an unconstitutional order!" he told Al Jazeera in an interview in 2023.

(AFP)



Nigeria deports 50 Chinese nationals in cybercrime crackdown

NIGERIA has deported 50 Chinese nationals and one Tunisian convicted of cyber-terrorism and internet fraud as part of a crackdown on foreign-led cybercrime networks, the country's anti-graft agency said on Thursday.

Since the clampdown was launched on August 15 by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in partnership with the immigration service, 102 people have now been deported, EFCC spokesperson Dele Oyewale said in a statement.

The Tunisian and Chinese citizens were among nearly 200 foreign nationals arrested in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, during a raid targeting one of the largest cybercrime syndicates in the country, Oyewale said.

Late last year, the EFCC arrested almost 800 people in a building in Lagos believed to be a hub for fraudsters who lured victims with offers of romance, then pressed them to hand over cash for phoney cryptocurrency investments.

(Reuters)

Botswana central bank holds rate for sixth meeting as inflationary risks weigh

GABORONE - Botswana's central bank left its monetary policy rate (BWRATE=ECI), opens new tab unchanged at 1.90 percent on Thursday, its six consecutive meeting without adjustments, citing upside risks to the inflation outlook in a struggling domestic economy.

Inflation in the Southern African nation stood at 1.1 percent, below the central bank's target range of 3 percent-6 percent.

The Bank of Botswana revised its inflation outlook upward, projecting an average rate of 3.5 percent for 2025 and 5.9 percent for 2026, compared to 2.7 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively, in its June forecast. The central bank widened the trading margin for the pula in July, sparking significant exchange rate adjustments by commercial banks for foreign currency transactions.

"Risks to the inflation outlook are assessed to be tilted to the upside. This is primarily due to market reaction following the recent widening of trading margins of the pula, which led to an increase in prices of some

goods and services," Governor Cornelius Dekop said.

To enhance economic competitiveness, Botswana's government announced last month that it would allow its currency to depreciate by 2.76 percent over the next year, accelerating the pace from the previously announced 1.51 percent in December. Authorities aim to make local goods and services more competitive, reduce demand for foreign exchange, and safeguard foreign currency reserves. Another review of the pula's exchange rate policy is slated for the end of the year. Dekop also said that there was scope for monetary policy to remain accommodative to support economic recovery and cushion the economy against the negative spillovers from the subdued global economic activity.

Botswana has long been seen as one of Africa's economic success stories. But that has been tested by the diamond market downturn, which caused gross domestic product to contract 3 percent last year and could trigger another contraction this year. (Reuters)



Legal challenge targets Cameroon president's bid for eighth term

PRESIDENT Paul Biya, aged 92 and poised to seek an eighth term in the October elections, now faces a significant legal obstacle.

Akere Tabeng Muna, a prominent opposition candidate and former bar president, has filed a formal petition with the Constitutional Council alleging that Biya is constitutionally ineligible to run under Article 118 of the electoral code.

The motion cites Biya's advanced age, recurrent health absences, and presumed dependency on third parties as grounds for disqualification. Muna emphasizes that this is not a political attack but a legal imperative to uphold the state of law. The ruling is expected this Friday at 11 a.m. at the Palais des Congrès in the capital.

This move comes amidst further constraints on fair competition. Recently, the Constitutional Council upheld the exclusion of Paul Biya's major rival, Maurice Kamto, from the ballot—raising serious doubts over the credibility of the electoral process. Human Rights Watch has condemned the decision, and pro-Kamto protesters were tear-gassed during demonstrations in Yaoundé.

Biya, in power since 1982, remains one of the longest-serving—and oldest—heads of state globally, with his candidacy already confirmed via social media.

As Cameroonians await the court's verdict, tensions run high, reflecting widespread concerns over health, governance, and ballot integrity in a country where President Biya's grip shows no sign of easing. (Reuters)

Israel says it has taken first steps of military operation in Gaza City



▲ A military official briefing reporters earlier on Wednesday said reserve soldiers would not report for duty until September, an interval that gives mediators some time to bridge gaps between Hamas and Israel over truce terms.

ISRAEL'S military announced the first steps of an operation to take over Gaza City on Wednesday and called up tens of thousands of reservists while the government considered a new ceasefire proposal to pause nearly two years of war.

"We have begun the preliminary operations and the first stages of the attack on Gaza City, and already now IDF forces are holding the outskirts of Gaza City," Brigadier General Effie Defrin, Israel's military spokesperson, told reporters.

A military official briefing reporters earlier on Wednesday said reserve soldiers would not report for duty until September, an interval that gives mediators some time to bridge gaps between Hamas and Israel over truce terms.

But after Israeli troops clashed with Hamas fighters in the Palestinian enclave on Wednesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the Israeli leader sped up the timeline for taking control of Hamas strongholds and defeating the militant group that triggered the conflict with an attack on Israel in October 2023.

The Israeli statements signaled Israel was pressing ahead with its plan to seize Gaza's biggest urban centre despite international criticism of an operation likely to force the displacement of many more Palestinians.

Defrin said troops were already operating on the outskirts of Gaza City, and Hamas was now a "battered and bruised" guerrilla force. "We will deepen the attack on Hamas in Gaza City, a stronghold of governmental and military terror for the terrorist organization," the spokesman said.

Israel's military called up tens of thousands of reservists on Wednesday in preparation for the expected assault on Gaza City,

as the Israeli government considered a new truce proposal.

Hamas, in a statement on Telegram, accused Netanyahu of obstructing the ceasefire deal in favour of continuing a "brutal war against innocent civilians in Gaza City."

"Netanyahu's disregard for the mediators' proposal ... proves that he is the real obstructionist of any agreement."

Israel's security cabinet, chaired by Netanyahu, approved a plan this month to expand the campaign in Gaza with the aim of taking Gaza City, where Israeli forces waged fierce

urban warfare with Hamas in the early stages of the war. Israel currently holds about 75% of the Gaza Strip.

Many of Israel's closest allies have urged the government to reconsider, but Netanyahu is under pressure from some far-right members of his coalition to reject a temporary ceasefire, continue the war and pursue the annexation of the territory.

One far-right member, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, announced final approval on Wednesday of a widely condemned Israeli plan for a settlement project in the occu-

pled West Bank that he said would erase any prospect of a Palestinian state.

The war in Gaza began on October 7, 2023, when gunmen led by Hamas attacked southern Israeli communities near the border, killing some 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and taking 251 hostages including children into Gaza, according to Israeli figures.

Over 62,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's air and ground war in Gaza since then, according to Gaza health officials, who do not say how many were militants but have said most of those killed have been women and children.

Hamas has accepted a proposal put forward by Arab mediators for a 60-day ceasefire that would involve releasing some of the remaining hostages and freeing Palestinian prisoners in Israel.

The Israeli government, which has said all the 50 remaining hostages must be released at once, is studying the proposal. Israeli authorities believe that 20 hostages are still alive.

Many Gazans and foreign leaders fear a storming of Gaza City would cause significant casualties. Israel says it will help civilians leave battle zones before any assault begins.

Israeli troops clashed on Wednesday with more than 15 Hamas militants who emerged from tunnel shafts and attacked with gunfire and anti-tank missiles near Khan Younis, south of Gaza City, severely wounding one soldier and lightly wounding two others, an Israeli military official said. (Reuters)

Talk of boots on the ground in Ukraine sparks unease in Germany

Allied talk of sending European peacekeeping forces to protect Ukraine as part of a possible peace deal with Russia has sparked a backlash in Germany, a country still scarred by its militaristic Nazi past, even if the prospect remains remote.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz has signalled openness to German participation in a possible peacekeeping mission in Ukraine

while emphasizing that such a decision would require coordination with European partners and his own coalition.

He also noted that any troop deployment would likely require a Bundestag mandate, a challenge for a chancellor whose own appointment was only voted through on the second attempt. Russia is fiercely opposed to any troops from the NATO alliance being deployed and it is far from clear how such a force

could work.

Alice Weidel, the head of the surging far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) accused Merz's conservatives of war-mongering for even considering the idea of ground troops, slamming it as "dangerous and irresponsible".

Even Merz's Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul warned sending troops to Ukraine "would probably overwhelm us".

(Reuters)



▲ US president Donald Trump.

In huge win for Trump, court throws out half-billion-dollar fraud penalty

In a triumph for Donald Trump, a New York state appeals court on Thursday threw out a half-billion-dollar penalty while preserving a fraud case against him, enabling the U.S. president to rebound from one of his biggest legal defeats.

The deeply divided decision by the Appellate Division in Manhattan is also a defeat for New York Attorney General Letitia James, one of Trump's biggest foes, who he accused of bringing the civil fraud lawsuit to advance a political witch hunt and deny him a second White House term.

A trial judge had ordered the penalty in February 2024 after finding that Trump fraudulently overstated his wealth and the value of his properties to bolster his family business.

Trump denied wrongdoing, and his lawyers argued that any errors in reporting his fortune to his lenders and business partners were irrelevant because none was harmed.

Four judges on the five-member appeals court voted to let the fraud finding stand, but all found problems in the judge's handling of the case and two would have ordered a new trial.

(Reuters)



▲ A service member of the 44th Separate Artillery Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces fires a 2S22 Bohdana self-propelled howitzer towards Russian troops near a front line, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine.



Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE weekend is here, and it's the perfect moment to unwind from the week's demands and dive into relaxation and adventure.

To ensure you enjoy your time off to the fullest, Eswatini Daily News has carefully compiled a selection of the best weekend events. So, pour yourself a drink, invite your friends or family, and prepare to boost your mood.

► RHYTHM & GROOVE

When: Friday

Where: 23:28 Lounge

Fee: Free

Mbabane is set to come alive with the pulsating sounds of house music as local sensation DJ Rekorder takes centre stage at the next instalment of Rhythm & Groove. Hosted by New Life Entertainment, this monthly highly anticipated event will take place on Friday, August 22, 2025, at the stylish 23:28 Lounge located in the Mbabane Checkers Business Park. With a reputation for electrifying performances, DJ Rekorder, born Lwazi Nzuza, is ready to deliver an unforgettable night of music that promises to resonate with fans and newcomers alike. The evening will feature a special deep house set from DJ Rekorder, who will be sharing the decks with an impressive lineup of local talent, including Slotta, DJ Cup, Expo, Nelson X, and Mpho. The event kicks off in the evening and runs late into the night, with entry priced at E50 after 7 pm. Rekorder expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "It's refreshing to have an all-local line-up for this edition of Rhythm & Groove. I encourage locals to come out and support us next Friday for a night of fun and great music."

► 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 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 Skeezy and Tairro headlining the night's entertainment. The event will be supported by resident DJs.

► SWAZI PLAZA NIGHTS

When: Friday

Where: Food Court, Swazi Plaza

Fee: Free

Eswatini's music scene is set to shine as talented musician Young Zesh headlines the upcoming edition of Swazi Plaza Nights. The event will take place at the Food Court inside the Swazi Plaza, offering a fantastic opportunity for music lovers to enjoy a night of entertainment and community bonding. Best of all, entry to this highly anticipated event is free, making it accessible to everyone. Swazi Plaza announced the exciting lineup on their social media platforms, stating, "Bringing you the best in local music and a late afternoon hangout. Join us next Friday, 22 August from 6:30 pm at the Food Court, for your favourite weekend starter with an amazing line-up.



Exciting weekend events

Young Zesh, the multi-award-winning Hip Hop/Rap star is set to make history on our stages with an electrifying performance. DJ Di Dang, the OG house-music maestro, is guaranteed to keep the dancefloor blazing with those timeless grooves." In addition to Young Zesh, the event will feature DJ Di Dang, known for his infectious beats and ability to get the crowd moving. The evening will also showcase the talents of resident DJ Twanas, a crowd favourite who is expected to deliver an incredible set that will keep attendees dancing into the night. Swazi Plaza encourages guests to come prepared with both their appetites and dancing shoes, as food and drinks will be available at the venue.

► 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 Acoustic Soul, 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 Snolove,

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.

► SIMPLE SATURDAYS

When: Saturday

Where: Mdzimba View Shisanyama

Fee: E100

Renowned South African musical artist Thabang Innocent Mangolo of Murumba Pitch fame is gearing up to deliver an unforgettable experience at Mdzimba View Shisanyama.

The much-anticipated 'Simple Saturdays' event is scheduled for August 23, 2025, is set to be a night filled with rhythm, dance, and vibrant energy. The lineup for the event at Mdzimba View is equally impressive, featuring a host of local talents including Baba, Castle, Selector, Zulu D, Ayacity, and Sbu De Drum DJ, among others. Each artist brings their flair to the stage, ensuring a diverse musical experience that caters to all tastes. This collaboration of artists is expected to create an electrifying atmosphere, making it a must-attend event for music enthusiasts. Tickets for the event are affordably priced, with general

admission set at E100, increasing to E150 after 9 pm. For those looking to elevate their experience, VIP entry is available at E250, which will rise to E350 after the same time. The event encourages attendees to dress in smart casual attire, fostering a stylish yet relaxed environment for everyone to enjoy.

► GENRE SWITCH

When: Saturday

Where: Ocean Cuisine

Fee: Free

Music lovers in Eswatini are in for a special treat this August as the much-talked-about Genre Switch promises a night of explosive sounds and genre-bending performances. Best of all, the event's entry is free. The lineup is a carefully crafted blend of local talent, each artist bringing their flavour to the stage. Headlining the night is Sgitha, who will be delivering Afro Beats.

Alongside him is Bandora, who will play Amapiano. Fans of Hip Hop will not be left behind as Sweet Shandis takes over with bars and beats that are expected to ignite the crowd. Adding to the diversity, Sbu De Drum DJ will showcase 3Step, while Bay Bash brings the amapiano heat to another level. Zulu D, one of the most consistent DJs in Eswatini's scene, will drop a Deep House set, The Bishop is set to revive the old-school vibes with Kwaito, while Ayacity will keep the energy raw and unfiltered with a dose of Gqom.

Sancheziez shines on 1KZN TV

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI music star Sancheziez became the first liSwati artist to be featured on 1KZN TV, the renowned KwaZulu-Natal broadcast service, in a pre-recorded episode of the Ugubhu Lwami show that promises to bring Eswatini rhythms into living rooms across South Africa.

The show was filmed with an interview and four live performances and is scheduled to air on October 23, 2025, on DStv channel 261 from 6 pm to 8 pm. Sancheziez arrived at the 1KZN studios accompanied by a tight creative team that included Mabhodweni, Ligabazi Simphiweyinkhosi Sibisi and Miss Cultural Heritage 2021 First Princess Ncedo Mamba, who performed as backup dancers. The artist described the reception as exceptionally warm, noting that production documented the group from arrival to wrap. The mood backstage and on set, he said, was “A-grade,” reflecting professional hospitality and a collaborative atmosphere between the Eswatini delegation and the 1KZN crew.

At the Ugubhu Lwami taping, Sancheziez and his ensemble performed four songs: “Siyabonga Gogo,” “Mbali,” “Nguye” and “Vele.” The set blended contemporary production with liSwati melodic and rhythmic elements, offering viewers an accessible introduction to the artist’s sound. Sancheziez reported that the group “brought their best on stage,” delivering a performance that balanced vocal clarity, choreography and cultural expression.

The visual presentation was considered part of the performance. Sancheziez credited Vunula with Cece for dressing the emagabazi (dancers) and Lasiies Crafts — specifically an Umhelwane piece, for his stage wardrobe. The coordinated outfits reinforced the show’s cultural identity while giving the televised performance a polished,



television-ready look.

Being the first Swati artist to feature on 1KZN TV carried both symbolic and practical weight. Sancheziez described the moment as “giving goosebumps,” emphasising the historical significance of crossing a new broadcast threshold for Eswatini music. Beyond symbolism, he highlighted the practical benefit of networking: the appearance opened doors for future collaborations and bookings in South Africa. “We took the music to South Africa,” he said, noting plans to “grace many

events” as the exposure translates into live opportunities.

Sancheziez used the platform to spotlight his recently released project, Salukazana, which dropped days before the television appearance. Early reception, he reported, is promising: the single “Nguye” is leading in numbers with “Mbali” close behind. Sancheziez acknowledged that streaming momentum often builds over time and said a promotional strategy would be unveiled soon to broaden the album’s reach and recognition.

Emagagu features MBK The Poet on ‘Usuku Lwethu’

ESWATINI’S music scene is set to welcome a fresh Afro-pop hit as the trio Emagagu collaborates with renowned poet and artist MBK The Poet on their new single, “Usuku Lwethu.”

Scheduled for release this Friday across all major digital streaming platforms, the song is set to blend heartfelt lyrics with infectious rhythms, marking an exciting evolution in Emagagu’s musical journey. Emagagu, known for their dynamic sound and innovative approach, shared insights about the project in a recent interview.

This latest release represents their third single of the year and signals a stylistic shift. “We are excited to work on an Afro-pop project since we’ve been working on African trap beats,” the group explained, highlighting their versatility and willingness to explore new genres. The collaboration with MBK The Poet, whose lyrical prowess adds depth and emotion, enriches the track’s appeal.

“Usuku Lwethu,” which translates to “Our Day,” is a love song that captures the nostalgia and excitement of early romance. The trio described the song as a reflection on the memorable moments when two people first meet and begin their journey together.



“It is all about reminiscing about the day you met your loved one and also those days when you started dating, all the crazy stuff you used to do,” they said.

The production of the song has an interesting backstory. Initially recorded in February 2023, Emagagu decided to re-record “Usuku Lwethu” to enhance its production quality, ensuring the final version meets high standards. The song

was produced by Milton B, who also directed the accompanying visualizer. The visualizer, described as simple, was shot in a single day in Fairview, emphasising the song’s intimate and authentic vibe without unnecessary complexity. “The song is coming out this Friday. Please do justice and stream it, and share the links. The song will be available on all digital streaming platforms,” they concluded.



Sibanesami Hotel to ignite with Bikini Pool Party

THE heat is about to rise in Eswatini as Sibanesami Hotel, in collaboration with Zee GXNG, presents the much-anticipated Bikini Pool Party 4th Edition on August 23, 2025.

The event, which has quickly become one of the most flamboyant summer preludes in the country, promises a perfect blend of music, fun, fashion, and nightlife under the theme “Neon Nights.” From midday until the early hours, Sibanesami Hotel will transform into a playground of colour, rhythm, and youthful energy. Gates swing open at 11 am, but the real action begins at noon, carrying the party spirit “till late.” The organisers have lined up an impressive roster of entertainers, promising a non-stop feast of music across multiple genres to keep the poolside atmosphere electric.

The lineup is nothing short of explosive, with big names such as DJ Lady Zee, Zulu D, Obsession, Skullboi, Sbu De Drum DJ, Sgitha, ItsAllBlaq, Sean Chantel, Selby, Master Jack, True Classic, The Prefect, DJ Baba, and The Double Keyz. The party doesn’t stop there, resident DJs will also step in to maintain the heat, ensuring not a single moment of silence in the poolside air. To guide the night with flair, MC Juluka and Greg XV will take the stage, while Blackchild holds it down as the official host.

Organisers are pulling out all stops to make this year’s edition the most memorable yet. With the Neon Nights theme, guests are encouraged to “get your most colourful swimsuits and shorts” for a visual spectacle under the lights. The dress code is clear and unapologetically bold: strictly bikinis for ladies and shorts for gents. The fashion element is expected to be as much of a highlight as the music itself, with neon and bright colours glowing against the night sky.

For those eyeing the cost of entry, the pricing has been designed to encourage group attendance. Singles will part with E100, couples at E150, while groups of five can enter at a discounted rate of E400, a package sure to attract squads of partygoers ready to make memories together. Tickets are available via Smart Tickets, giving fans easy access to secure their spot at what’s billed to be one of the hottest events of the season.

Streaming giants revisit Thabo Bester and Nandipha Magudumana scandal

NETFLIX is set to reignite public fascination with one of South Africa's most shocking scandals when it drops *Beauty And The Bester*, a three-part true crime docuseries premiering on September 12.

The series delves into the captivating tale of Dr Nandipha Magudumana and her connection to the convicted rapist and murderer Thabo Bester, a narrative that continues to captivate the nation.

Magudumana, once celebrated as a successful doctor, businesswoman, and influencer, enjoyed a glamorous lifestyle that concealed a far darker reality.

The Netflix series chronicles her swift decline from prominence, triggered by revelations about her involvement in Bester's audacious 2022 escape from Mangaung Maximum Security Prison.

The scandal exploded in 2023 when the pair was spotted shopping at Sandton City, sparking outrage and a nationwide manhunt that ended with their dramatic arrest in Tanzania and extradition to South Africa. *Beauty And The Bester* promises to go beyond the headlines.

Featuring exclusive courtroom footage, unreleased investigative material, and emotional interviews with friends and family, the series examines how a woman with status and ambition became entangled in one of the country's most infamous criminal controversies.



▲ The series delves into the captivating tale of Dr Nandipha Magudumana and her connection to the convicted rapist and murderer Thabo Bester, a narrative that continues to captivate the nation.

Betrayal that shaped Magudumana's fall. It probes the murky dynamics of her relationship with Bester, raising chilling questions about manipulation, loyalty, and complicity.

The upcoming release follows on the heels of Showmax's hit 2023 documentary *Tracking Thabo Bester*, which offered viewers a gripping first look at the scandal as it unfolded. That series, released just months after Bester and Magudumana's arrest, focused on his shocking prison break and the manhunt that followed.

While Showmax's take gave audiences a

raw, journalistic unpacking of events, Netflix's version promises a more expansive and dramatic exploration, peeling back personal layers and the psychological complexities at the heart of the story.

The rivalry between the two streaming giants reflects just how much public interest the Bester saga continues to command.

Showmax initially set the stage by capturing the immediate aftermath, while Netflix now takes the lead by delving deeper into the glamour, betrayal, and corruption that shaped Magudumana's downfall.

(Sunday World)

Unfair Somizi taking opportunities from local artists

PHILA Madlingozi, an actor and singer, expressed his frustration with the Ebubeleni event organisers in his hometown of Gqeberha.

In a Facebook rant, he criticised the organisers for flying in Somizi Mhlongo while overlooking local talent.

Madlingozi's post reads: "Somizi was booked to introduce Vusi. Kuphiswange mali sikhona e Gqeberha shame. Next, mandiphoswe yi Ebubeleni again for the 9th year [Somizi was booked to introduce Vusi while we're being overlooked. Money is being wasted here in Gqeberha, shame. Next, please invite me to Ebubeleni again for the 9th year." Speaking to Sunday World, Madlingozi stood by his post: "I have nothing against Somizi, and I am not saying he should not be booked.

"All I'm saying is that it's not fair for event organisers to bring in celebrities from afar while local talent is ignored. I am from Gqeberha, and I've never performed at that event. "Of course I'd like to perform, but I'm simply not provided an opportunity. I know this is a struggle for most upcoming and local artists; we are often not booked by event organisers, and it's not fair."

Madlingozi is unapologetic

He added that even if he were to meet Somizi, he would repeat his words to him directly. "I don't care if Somizi sees my post, but I want him to know that this is not an attack on him.

"If he is reasonable, he'll understand my point. In fact, I've never seen Somizi advocating for local artists or speaking out on industry issues.

"He's silent because he's also benefiting. I'm not doubting his hard work, but it's unfair that he's still taking opportunities from local artists," he said.

Madlingozi acknowledged that some people might not agree with him, but he remains unapologetic. "I've always been vocal, and I'm not going to keep quiet. It is important for someone to articulate these facts. It is important for someone to initiate the discussion so we can effectively address these issues. "I also know that once you become vocal as an artist, cancel culture starts. Well, I'm not cancellable, and I will not stop raising these issues," he said. The Ebubeleni event organisers and Mhlongo were approached for comments but failed to respond. (Sunday World)

Why producer holds on to 20 unreleased songs by late rapper Flabba

RAPPER Nkululeko Habedi, better known by his stage name Flabba, recorded a complete album with more than 20 songs prior to his tragic death. The member of Skwatta Kamp spent weeks recording a solo album at Turbang Studios' producer Thabang Madisha's house, which he intended to release on his own.

However, a fight with his girlfriend, Sindisiwe Manqe, ended the rapper's life a few weeks after he finished his album.

Madisha, who spent hours recording the artist, stated that he is in a difficult situation regarding the music's release. "I spent a lot of time with Flabba, working on the music," Madisha said.

Unresolved issues with estate

"I don't like conflict. I don't want to release the music if it will lead to issues regarding royalties and disputes over music rights. Madisha said if the music is released, all royalties need to go to the late rapper's son.

"I believe if anything is to be released, it needs to go to his child, Lesego, and the people who raised him and loved him unconditionally."

He gave Sunday World a hint that there might be some unresolved issues with Flabba's estate at the moment.

"I don't know the details, but I am holding onto the music until the right time, and I don't know when that will be," he said.

Madisha claimed that he met the late rapper through a mutual friend and spent hours with him.

"He was always at my parents' home recording. He felt comfortable with it. The project was recorded just a few weeks before his passing."

According to Madisha, if he releases any



▲ Rapper Nkululeko Habedi, better known by his stage name Flabba, recorded a complete album with more than 20 songs prior to his tragic death.

of the music, it will be a song recorded with L-Tido and Sean Pages or a single featuring Zinhle Buthelezi, better known as Zino Buu.

Madisha remarked: "I know he wanted people to hear the amazing music he made."

Flabba's untimely death

Tshepang Habedi, Flabba's younger brother, is aware of the unreleased music. "I want my brother's legacy to live on. I want people to hear his music," said Habedi.

Flabba died on March 9, 2015, at the age of 37, after Manqe stabbed him in the chest after witnessing him converse with a former

lover.

Manqe received a 12-year sentence to serve at the Johannesburg Correctional Centre. After six years in prison, she was released on parole in 2022.

A year after being released from prison, Manqe, who had studied law during her incarceration, found employment as a legal researcher and continued to rebuild her life.

She previously shared how she suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder after being released from prison.

(Sunday World)

How to Keep Your Skin Beautiful

YOUR skin protects your body, but that's not all. It's the face you present to the world. When healthy, it's a source of beauty.

The choices you make every day -- what you eat, where you go, how you feel -- affect how your skin looks. Use this visual guide to keep your skin youthful, healthy, and wrinkle-free.

You've Got Food on Your Face

Want good skin? Watch your diet. Higher intakes of vitamin C and a lower intake of fats and carbohydrates are associated with better appearance as your skin ages. Changing your diet will help your looks. Foods rich in antioxidants, such as fish, fruits, and vegetables, seem to help protect skin. Some studies suggest that to avoid breakouts, go for complex carbohydrates (like whole grains and pasta) and healthy protein. Dairy may also be linked to acne flares.

Eat Your Vitamins

Your anti-aging cream may contain vitamin C or E. Put these antioxidants to work from the inside, too. Eating foods rich in these vitamins, plus the mineral selenium, can help protect your skin against sun damage. They may even help reverse signs of aging, like wrinkles and skin discoloration.

Run Away From Aging Skin

Exercise benefits every part of your body -- including your largest organ, the skin. Working out improves circulation, helping nourish the skin. Better blood flow brings more oxygen and nutrients and may help your skin produce collagen, which staves off wrinkles. Don't fret about sweat -- exercise will not clog your pores. Wash your face right after a workout and avoid tight headbands, which can trap sweat and irritate skin.

Get Your Beauty Rest

Burn the candle at both ends for a few nights, and you may see it reflected in your face: Dark circles under the eyes, pale skin, and puffy eyes. Getting 7-8 hours a night will keep your body and skin in top shape. It matters how you sleep, too -- rest your face on the pillow in the same position for years, and you'll get wrinkles where the skin is pressed against the pillow. Sleeping on your stomach will worsen bags under your eyes. Solution? Sleep on your back.

How Pregnancy Changes Your Skin

Stretch marks -- 90% of pregnant women get them. They may fade after delivery. Moisturizers can slightly improve the appearance of stretch marks. Prescription vitamin A creams or laser therapy may help too, but they should not be used while you are pregnant. Acne is another common skin problem, caused by the extra hormones in your body. Your best bet for avoiding breakouts is to wash your face twice a day and use an oil-free moisturizer. Ask your doctor before using any acne products.

Avoiding Melasma

Melasma is a type of hyperpigmentation that causes brown or gray brown spots

See how your life affects your skin



to show up on your face, lateral neck, or arms. Women are more often affected than men and it is usually triggered by either hormonal changes or sun exposure. Pregnancy triggered melasma may clear up after the pregnancy. Your doctor may prescribe a cream containing hydroquinone, kojic, retinoic or salicylic acid, or a cream or pills with niacinamide or traxemic acid to treat it.

Keep Harmful Rays Off Skin

Whether or not you were a sun worshipper, chances are your skin has sun damage. About 90% of all skin damage is due to the sun. As your time in the sun goes up, so does your risk of skin cancer. Protect skin by always wearing broad-spectrum sunblock. Look for products that

contain zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, or avobenzone. Sunscreens with an SPF of 30 or higher are best. Wear wide-brimmed hats and long sleeves, and avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when rays are strongest.

How to Care for Aging Skin

As you age, your skin changes. Your body doesn't produce as much collagen, and the elastin that allows skin to spring back into place gets weaker. You also don't create or lose skin cells as fast. To boost aging skin, exfoliate to remove dead skin, use a nondrying soap, and moisturize often. Use over-the-counter retinoids to reduce fine wrinkles, or ask your doctor about a prescription version. Most of all, stay out of the sun.

Should You Drink Coffee or Wear It?

Caffeine in coffee and tea is dehydrating, so it may cause your skin to dry out. But a study found that when applied topically to skin, caffeine may help reverse sun damage and lower risk of some skin cancers -- in mice, at least. Researchers are now trying to see if topical caffeine protects human skin, too.

Cut Yourself Off

Too much alcohol is bad for your skin as well as your body. Alcohol is a diuretic; it causes the body to lose water. That can contribute to dry skin. It also dilates blood vessels. That's why drinkers often have red,



flushed faces. Over time, these blood vessels can become permanently damaged, so that skin stays red. Alcohol, especially red wine, can also trigger rosacea flare-ups.

Quit, Already!

Simply put, smoking is bad for your skin: It's second only to the sun in causing premature wrinkles and dry skin. In fact, under a microscope you can see wrinkles in smokers as young as 20. Smoking reduces blood flow to the skin and contributes to the breakdown of collagen. Less collagen means more wrinkling. And yes, pursing your lips repeatedly encourages wrinkles, too. You can't reverse the damage, but you can stop it by quitting smoking.

Wash the Day Away

Every day, your skin comes in contact with pollution -- cigarette smoke, car exhaust, or smoggy air. Keep skin healthy by keeping it clean. Depending on the needs of your skin, you can cleanse your face with a gentle soap or wash, or exfoliate nightly with gentle scrubs and toners to remove dead skin cells, and then apply a retinoid cream and moisturizer. (Oily skin still needs moisturizer; look for oil-free products.)

Inside and Out in Winter

Cold weather and wind bring on dry, flaky skin and can make eczema and rosacea worse. It's not just the weather outside -- dry heat indoors is harsh on skin, too. Fight back by using a humidifier at home, drinking lots of water, and applying moisturizer throughout the day. Remember the sunscreen when you go out.

Skin Care in Summer

Want a tan? Get a safe one: use a bronzer or sunless self-tanner. (But most don't contain sunscreen, so they don't offer any protection from the sun.) Remember to use a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen on all exposed skin and to reapply every two hours or more frequently if you're sweating or have been in the water. And unless you have persistently dry skin, switch to an oil-free moisturizer to avoid breakouts in humid weather. It's a good idea to rinse off after being in the pool to get rid of any chlorine on your skin.

Tips for Skin Care in the Air

It doesn't take long on a plane for skin to start feeling dry and tight, thanks to low humidity in the recirculated air. Have a travel plan for your skin that includes drinking water -- not coffee or alcohol -- and moisturizing before, during, and after your flight. Don't wear makeup on the flight if you can help it. Keep a travel-size bottle of lotion in your carry-on bag.

Get Ready for Your Close-up

Hollywood lives by it: Changing the lighting can change the way you look. Fluorescent lighting can make skin tone appear more red or yellow, while incandescent lighting softens colors and imperfections. Use mirrors with varied lighting to view your skin and makeup under different conditions. That way you won't look overdone or sallow as lighting changes. Go more dramatic at night, when lighting is lower.

WebMD



You say potato, we say why not?

The Not-So-Lowly Spud

YES, it's true. Potatoes have lots of carbs. But they also have loads of nutrients, like potassium and magnesium.

And they're much lower in calories than other staples (we're looking at you, rice and pasta). That is as long as you leave off the butter, sour cream, cheese, and bacon bits. (Sigh.)

Hot Potato, Cold Potato

The starch in potatoes can be hard to digest -- it's called resistant starch. So your body changes some of it into short-chain fatty acids that help keep your gut healthy and may help prevent obesity, colon cancer, and diabetes. Cooking does away with some, but it comes back when the potatoes cool. Potato salad, anyone?

Potatoes Have Protein

Along with resistant starches, this might help lower bad cholesterol. Scientists are still looking into it, but in the meantime, you might try some boiled red potatoes with a touch of olive oil as part of your healthy diet. In moderate amounts, the oil can be good for your cholesterol, too.

You'll Eat Less

Potatoes top something called the satiety index, which ranks how well different foods satisfy your hunger. Based on calories, nothing beats the potato. If you feel full, you're likely to eat less, which makes you less likely to get heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes. And what's more satisfying than mashed potatoes? (Keep the skins, and leave out the butter and cream.)

Packed With Potassium



A boost in this mineral can help lower your blood pressure, and it works better if you get it from food instead of supplements. Potatoes have more of it gram-for-gram than bananas -- or any other fruit or vegetable, for that matter. For a new twist, try accordion potatoes: Make thin slices in them, but don't cut through. Then drizzle with olive oil and garlic, and bake.

The Blueberry - Potato Connection

They may seem as different as two foods can be, but both are high in chemicals called phytonutrients that help protect your cells. Like blueberries, potatoes with red, blue, or purple skins have a lot of one kind -- anthocyanins -- that scientists think can be especially good for you. Get plenty with some roasted purple potato soup.

Loads of Magnesium

Potatoes are a good source of this essential nutrient your body uses to make protein, store energy, and keep your cells

stable and healthy. It also helps process sugar in your blood. Some studies suggest it may help prevent migraine headaches, Alzheimer's disease, stroke, heart disease, and diabetes. More research is needed, but while you wait, bake a potato -- and top it with veggie chili instead of sour cream and butter to keep it healthy.

More Good Stuff

Potatoes also have calcium (important for strong teeth and bones), vitamin C (boosts your immune system), vitamin B6 (helps your body process protein), and folate (helps a baby develop in the womb).

Sweet Is Good, Too

A single serving of a sweet potato (1 cup) has more than 200% of your daily requirement of vitamin A, which is important for your vision. It also has more fiber, fewer calories, and fewer total carbs than a white potato. How about some oven-baked sweet potato fries?

WebMD

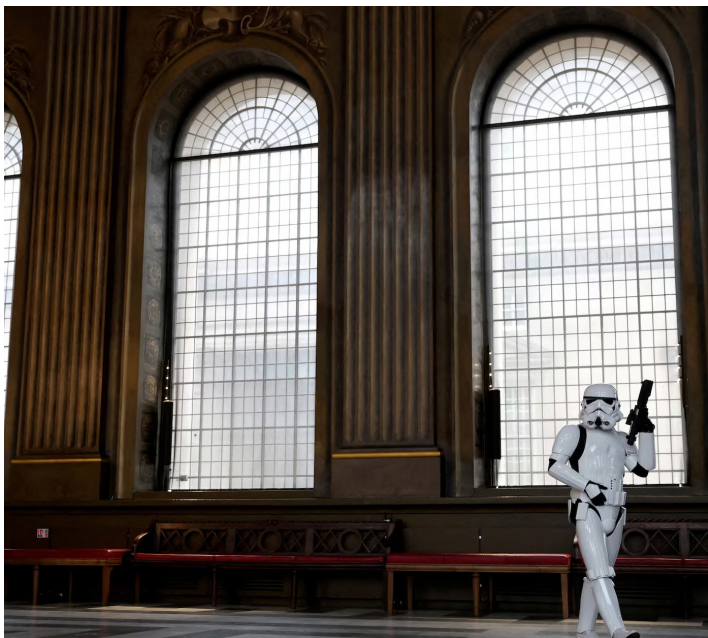
News in pictures



▲ A display of 50-foot-long legs and 22-foot-tall ruby slippers, a promotion for the upcoming “Wizard of Oz at Sphere” movie, in Las Vegas, Nevada.



▲ Palestinian woman Saja Hamad lies trapped under the rubble of a house hit in an Israeli strike, in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip.



▲ A costume fan dressed as a Stormtrooper walks through the Painted Hall during a press preview ahead of an upcoming Guinness World Record attempt at the Old Royal Naval College in London, Britain.



▲ Pope Leo XIV holds a baby during a general audience in the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican.



▲ People take shelter inside a metro station during an air raid alert in Kyiv.



▲ Panamanian and U.S. military personnel take part in a joint training exercise during Panamax, an annual operation focused on the defense of the Panama Canal and other strategic infrastructure, at the former U.S. military base Fort Sherman near Colon, Panama.



▲ An AI-reconstructed image, created at Tel Aviv University, shows a mixed Neanderthal-Homo Sapiens family. The image is based on research conducted by an Israeli-French team on a prehistoric child's skull, believed to be the world's earliest known human fossil exhibiting a combination of Neanderthal and Homo sapiens traits.via Tel Aviv University



▲ Police officers check individuals at the Anacostia bus station in Washington.



▲ Egyptian divers work to retrieve submerged artifacts in the coastal city of Alexandria, Egypt.

‘Downs inflated transfer price to disregard my career’

REIGNING Premier Soccer League (PSL) Player of the Season Lucas Ribeiro has confirmed the termination of his contract with Mamelodi Sundowns, effective on August 1.

The Brazilian star last played in the colours of Sundowns at the Fifa Club World Cup in the USA in July, where he stood out and attracted a lot of interest from several clubs abroad.

However, Ribeiro encountered obstacles in his abrupt desire to leave Masandwana, ultimately deciding to leave camp just days before the season began.

Amid the back and forth, Ribeiro referred the matter to the Fifa Football Tribunal, seeking a ruling on the consequences of the contract termination and maintaining that he acted well within his rights.

“I believe that I have just cause to terminate my contract with Mamelodi Sundowns FC, which I will explain before the Fifa Football Tribunal,” Ribeiro said in a statement posted by IOL on Thursday.

“My next employer will not be involved in the dispute between me and Mamelodi Sundowns FC — neither from a disciplinary

perspective nor financially.

The 26-year-old striker also mentioned that one reason for his decision to leave Sundowns was the need for personal stability, especially for his family, which significantly influenced his choice.

“The deal became impossible due to their unreasonable expectations. They [Sundowns] inflated the transfer price in a way that disregarded my career and personal situation.

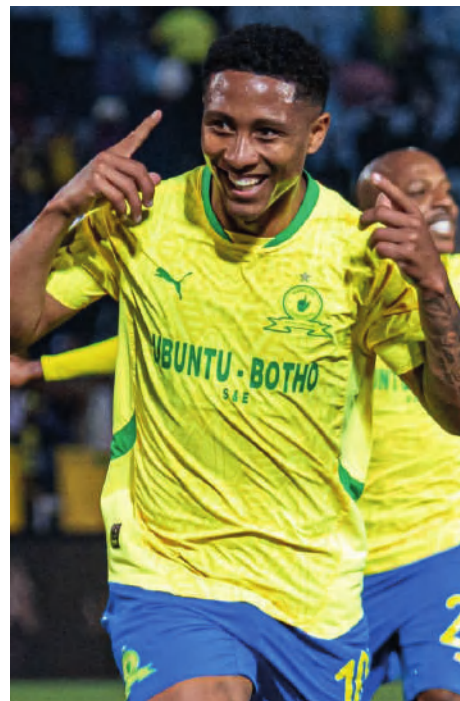
Ribeiro concluded: “My focus is on making decisions that will further my development as a footballer and ensure long-term stability for my family.”

However, Ribeiro did not reveal the transfer amount Mamelodi Sundowns demanded or the club he intended to join.

Ribeiro led the PSL in goals scored in 2024–2025, scoring 16 goals in 27 games and dishing out nine assists.

Sundowns are currently getting ready for their second-leg match against Orlando Pirates in the MTN8 semifinal, which is scheduled for Saturday afternoon at Lucas Moripe Stadium in Atteridgeville, Tshwane.

(Sunday World)



▲ Reigning Premier Soccer League (PSL) Player of the Season Lucas Ribeiro has confirmed the termination of his contract with Mamelodi Sundowns, effective on August 1.

Boks received more abuse from fans in the past

SPRINGBOK centre Damian de Allende said the team has not suffered too much verbal abuse from fans after their shock 38–22 defeat to the Wallabies at Ellis Park last week.

He said that compared to when fans swore at players on the streets after Ireland beat them for the first time in South Africa in 2016, beating the Springboks 26–20 in Cape Town with 14 men, this was nothing.

The Springboks suffered just their second defeat at their Ellis Park fortress (the first since 1963) against the Wallabies when they surrendered a 22–0 lead after 18 minutes, losing 38–22 in the Rugby Championship match last Saturday. South African sports fans can be harsh at the best of times, but the Johannesburg stadium erupted in jeers and booing a few times during the match, displeasure directed at referee Ben O’Keefe and Wallabies players alternately as fans came to grips with such an unexpected and shocking result.

But the criticism directed at the Springboks has been the hardest. When the Boks walked off the field at Ellis Park, they received little consolatory support. Fans and pundits alike have spoken harshly of players since the game, but many have also been patient and understanding. (The Citizen)



Pirates coach Ouaddou coy on Mofokeng future

COACH Abdeslam Ouaddou has reiterated his wish to see Relebohile Mofokeng remain at Orlando Pirates this season.

This comes after reports emerged in recent months linking the 20-year-old forward with overseas clubs with the latest being US Major League Soccer outfit Minnesota United who are said to have submitted an offer of around \$2 million (over R35 million) for his services. Mofokeng was in Ouaddou’s starting line-up when Pirates registered their first win in the league on Wednesday night, edging Stellenbosch FC 1–0 at the Orlando Stadium thanks to a wonder goal by Kamogelo Sebelebele.

During the post-match conference, Ouaddou was asked again about the speculation surrounding his star player Mofokeng and

he said he was not aware of the interest from Minnesota as his focus was on the clash against Stellies.

“I’m sorry about that question. Today I was only focused on the game of Stellenbosch FC, I didn’t have time to look or read in the media,” said Ouaddou.

“What I know is that Rele [Relebohile Mofokeng] is with us, and today he did well, which means that he is with us, and I hope that he will be with us. “Rele is a player that we have to give freedom because he is a kind of player who is intelligent and clever. He is a player that you can’t just keep on one side or stick in one role.

“You need to give him freedom, and I think today he had a lot of freedom,” added Ouaddou.

(The Citizen)

Chiefs’ Ben Youssef – ‘We are playing to win the league

WHISPER it quietly, but the signs for Kaizer Chiefs are promising. Amakhosi will face an acid test of the Betway Premiership title credentials on Wednesday when they face Mamelodi Sundowns at FNB Stadium.

Chiefs’ defensive gains

But the progress from last season, when Chiefs finished a dismal ninth in the table, is starting to show.

Chiefs have tightened up defensively. Aden McCarthy is proving a reliable central defensive partner to Inacio Miguel and new signing Thabiso Monyane also impressing. Last season it took Chiefs 16 games to keep three clean sheets. This season it has taken them just three. While improvements still need to be made in the final third, Chiefs have also found a way to win all three of their opening Premiership matches.

The last time they did that, in the 2014/15 season, Stuart Baxter’s Chiefs won the league. Chiefs assistant coach Khalil Ben Youssef has not ruled out this Amakhosi side doing the same.

“We have our (points) target in the team, it is between the players and the technical staff,” said Ben Youssef this week.

“It is written in the meeting room. We know what we have to do and we will keep it between us, and take it game by game.

“(But) Chiefs is one of the biggest teams in South Africa and if we are playing in the league we are playing to win the league.”

Sundowns, it is safe to say, will have other ideas, aiming for a ninth consecutive Premiership title this



▲ Kaizer Chiefs assistant coach Ben Youssef.

season.

But Chiefs can lay down a real marker on Wednesday with a win. Despite victories over Stellenbosch, Polokwane City and Richards Bay, there is little doubt Chiefs will have to find another level against Sundowns, however. ‘Still a lot to do’

“There is still a lot to do ... but until now we are 60 to 70 percent happy,” said Ben Youssef.

“The new players will give more solutions to help the team. They still have something to add, to ... create more situations to score.”

Left back Nkanyiso Shinga, midfielder Ethan Chislett and striker

er Fabio Da Silva all joined Chiefs ahead of the new season, and all now have the required clearance to play.

Chiefs have also added winger Asanele Velebaya to their ranks, and this week announced the signings of striker Etiosa Ighodaro and forward Luke Baartman. It remains to be seen how many, if any of these six, get to play against Sundowns. One man who should be there is head coach Nasreddine Nabi. Nabi has yet to sit on the bench this season, as he had to rush home to Tunisia after his wife was involved in a serious road accident.

(The Citizen)

Slot sidesteps Isak queries ahead of Newcastle game

LIVERPOOL boss Arne Slot dodged questions on Thursday about Newcastle United’s Alexander Isak with the transfer window closing and the wantaway striker expected to miss Monday’s game against Slot’s men at St James’ Park.

Isak was the subject of a 110 million pounds (\$148.34 million) bid from Liverpool earlier this month according to media reports, and in a social media post on Tuesday accused Newcastle of breaking promises.

Newcastle responded by saying there had been no commitment to sell the 25-year-old who is under contract until 2028.

“What I can tell you is not a lot,” Slot said of Isak, who is not training with his Newcastle teammates and sat out their 0-0 draw with Aston Villa in last week’s season-opener. “It would be much nicer to talk about the players that we have.”

While the transfer window closes on September 1, Slot does not believe the defending league champions, who have also been strongly linked with a move for Crystal Palace defender Marc Guehi, will have a busy nine days ahead of them.

“I don’t think so because then I would be unhappy with the squad we have and I am very, very happy with the squad we have,” he told reporters on Thursday. “Two per position is ideal but I prefer less than more because you have to disappoint so many players every single time.

“I am really happy with the squad, but if we think we can improve in a certain position and there is a player available that can really make us better ... this club has always shown they will bring these players in but only if they are everything we want.”

Slot will have Ryan Gravenberch back against Newcastle after the midfielder missed their loss to Crystal Palace in the Community Shield a day after his partner Cindy Peroti gave birth to their first child, and then their 4-2 season-opening win over



▲ Ipswich Town’s Ben Johnson in action with Newcastle United’s Alexander Isak.

Bournemouth as he served a suspension.

“I think he can make a lot (of difference),” Slot said. “At least, if he is the same player he was as last season.”

Goal

The manager is expecting a much stronger season from Federico Chiesa, who scored a late goal last week against Bournemouth.

“I see a totally different Federico now than for large parts of last season which is completely normal because he missed the entire pre-season and he came into a Premier League rhythm in terms of amount of games and intensity,” Slot said.

“He is in a much better place now and we can all see, when I needed a goal, I looked to the bench and I only had him and a 16-year-old in Rio (Ngumoha). It was more of a choice to bring him in and he delivered.”

Jeremie Frimpong, however, who limped off late in his Premier League debut last week because of a hamstring injury, will be out until after the international break.

“I think I got criticised for taking him off, didn’t I? It had nothing to do with how he played,” Slot said. “It was a good call to take him off.”

Reuters

‘Dembele can hit new heights this year’

PARIS St Germain manager Luis Enrique is convinced forward Ousmane Dembele can improve on his 2024-25 season, when he spearheaded PSG’s treble win and emerged as one of the leading Ballon d’Or contenders.

The 28-year-old Dembele emerged from the shadow of former PSG star Kylian Mbappe last season and proved instrumental in their Champions League winning run and continued to impress in the Club World Cup, where PSG finished runners-up.

Dembele, who scored 35 goals and made 16 assists last season, kept PSG alive in last week’s UEFA Super Cup, setting up Goncalo Ramos’ 94th-minute equaliser before new goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier drew praise for his saves in their penalty shootout win over Tottenham Hotspur.

“I think this season is a big challenge for Ousmane. Last year was incredible, yet I am convinced that he can improve his performance, without a doubt,” Luis Enrique said ahead of Friday’s home game against Angers. “You have to be very brave to say that (about Dembele), but I think he has got the level. He is a really important player for us. He has quality in attack and also in defence. I can see how happy he is; I hope this year will be even better.”

Friday’s game will be PSG’s first at the Parc des Princes in three months and mark



▲ Ousmane Dembele.

home debuts for Chevalier and defender Illia Zabarnyi.

The club will also present their five trophies (Ligue 1, French Cup, Champions League, French Super Cup and UEFA Super Cup) in front of the home crowd.

“It’s very important for us to see our fans again and return to the Parc des Princes after 10 away matches. We’ve really missed the stadium and the fans. We know that the atmosphere always makes a difference,” Luis Enrique said.

Asked whether ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine had caused any issues in the dressing room, with PSG’s squad now featuring Russian second-choice goalkeeper Matvei Safonov and Ukrainian defender Zabarnyi, Luis Enrique said football brought people together.

“Football is the best way to bring people together and create unity, not separation,” he said. “Sports and people come before political or economic interest of politicians.” **Reuters**



▲ AC Milan’s Noah Okafor celebrates scoring their second goal.

Premier League clubs break window spending record

LONDON - The Premier League’s transfer spending spree reached record levels with more than a week of trading to go as promoted Leeds United signed AC Milan forward Noah Okafor for a reported 18 million pounds (\$24.17 million) on Thursday.

Okafor’s arrival at Elland Road, following Bournemouth’s signing of Amine Adli from Bayer Leverkusen, pushed the total spend beyond the 2.36 billion pounds splashed out in the 2023 summer window, according to FootballTransfers.com.

Several other big-money deals between now and the closing of the window, including the likely sale of Eberechi Eze from Crystal Palace to Arsenal, mean spending by the world’s most lucrative soccer league could even hit 3 billion pounds.

While the list of big spenders is topped by the likes of champions Liverpool (289 million pounds), Chelsea (246 million), Manchester United (208 million) and Arsenal (194 million), even clubs with smaller resources have been splashing the cash.

Six clubs have broken their transfer records, including Liverpool paying 100 million pounds, and another 16 million in add-on payments, to Bayer Leverkusen for Florian Wirtz.

Drive

Burnley set a new club record by paying 25 million pounds for Chelsea midfielder Lesley Ugochukwu while fellow promoted club Sunderland did the same by signing midfielder Habib Diarra for 26 million pounds from Strasbourg, part of a 142 million pounds squad-strengthening drive.

Despite being outside the Premier League for eight seasons, Sunderland have spent more than any club in Europe’s other top leagues apart from Spain’s Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid. Nottingham Forest broke their transfer record twice during the current window in which they have spent almost 150 million pounds, including the signings of Switzerland winger Dan Ndoye from Bologna and winger Omari Hutchison from Ipswich Town. Spending by England’s Premier League this summer is more than that of Italy’s Serie A, Germany’s Bundesliga, France’s Ligue 1 and Spain’s LaLiga combined. Serie A is second on the spending list with around 783 million pounds on player investment although the league’s clubs have recouped more than that in sales. The Premier League’s muscle in the transfer market is largely explained by huge broadcasting deals. This season is the first of a four-year domestic TV rights deal worth a record 6.7 billion pounds. **Reuters**



Prizes galore in Tourism Nkwe Golf Day

Stories by Chris Dlamini

FOLLOWING a golfing experience at Ezulwini Golf and Country Club’s greens on Wednesday, it was prizes galore for the winners.

Several amateur golfers and first-timers from various local corporate companies took to the greens to celebrate the Eswatini Tourism Nkwe Golf Day, preceding a conference or Tourism dialogue scheduled for Thursday at Sharma House, Ezulwini. Tourism and Environmental Affairs Minister Jane Mkhonta opened the two-day event with her first-ever tee-off just after 8am.

However, she was not part of the winners’ awards ceremony in the afternoon but Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Vusi Dlamini announced the winners. The champions of the day were the duo of Kim Nisbet and Grant Goldstone with 46 points.

They received prizes sponsored by Ngwenya Glass and Swazi Trails.

Coming second on 45 points was Chas Prettejohn and partner Sifiso Nxumalo. They got prizes from Big Game Parks.

Overall, the top five winners were presented with prizes before every player received a gift from Ngwenya Glass to take home.

Meanwhile, the main prizes included white water rafting, wine bottles, trophies, Bushfire 2026 tickets, nights out at Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Happy Valley Hotel and Casino, Mountain View and International Hotel as well as wine tasting for two at Wine Boutique Hotel.

The Top 5 winners:

1. Kim Nisbet and Grant Goldstone - 46 points
2. Chas Prettejohn and Sifiso Nxumalo - 45 points
3. Patson Dlamini and John Mngometulu - 44 points
4. Vusi G. Dlamini and Mandla Dlamini - 45 points
5. Sam Richards and Angelina Toepfer - 45 points



▲ Winners Kim Nisbert and Grant Goldstone displaying their prizes during the 2025 Eswatini tourism golf Indaba held on Wednesday at Ezulwini country club.

Pro-golfer Oscar, ex-Moneni’s ‘Puma’ in Tourism swing

THE Eswatini Tourism Nkwe Golf Day not only attracted corporate dignitaries but also renowned sportspeople. While also number of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and their staff hit the fairways to enjoy golf in Ezulwini, spotted among them was local professional golfer Oscar Dube.

He shared a cart with yet another notable in former Moneni Pirates Public Relations Officer (PRO) and CEO Mlungisi ‘Puma’ Simelane.

“We’re here to have fun and it’s also good practice ahead of the Business League tomorrow (Thursday),” said Simelane.

His playing partner, Dube said it came in good time for him after missing out on the recent FNB Eswatini Challenge 2025 at the same venue.

“I didn’t play that tournament, but I’m playing in the King’s Cup Golf next month,” he said.

Meanwhile, among others who took to the greens are former prime minister in Senator Cleopas Dlamini, Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) Governor Phil Mnisi, Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) CEO Vusi Dlamini, ESD Quantity Surveyors’ Andreas Mkhathshwa, PREVIC Investments’ Victor Masilela and



▲ Sam Richards and Angelina Toepfer also won something on the day.



▲ Former Moneni Pirates CEO Mlungisi Simelane took part in the competition.

MTN Eswatini’s Patson Dlamini. For some companies, the superiors played alongside their staff while others were also sponsors in the event. The sponsoring partners are all listed in this article.

Sponsoring partners:

1. Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA)

2. AD Enterprises
3. Lactalis
4. Ngwenya Glass
5. Swazi Trails
6. Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS)
7. Financial Services Revenue Authority (FSRA)

8. Ubombo Sugar Limited
9. Eswatini Railway
10. BGP - Khibika Luxury Lodge
11. Happy Valley Hotel and Casino
12. The Wine Boutique
13. Global Village
14. Sibebe Resort
15. Hilton Garden Inn Hotel
16. Mountain View and International Hotel
17. Bushfire
18. Nkonyeni Golf Estate
19. Destiny Music



▲ Eswatini Golf Union president Jacques Potgieter with Mbabane golf juniors during the donations of golfing clubs held on Thursday.

Stories By Chris Dlamini

EGU hands over 24 golfing clubs for Development

THE Eswatini Golf Union has displayed commitment towards the development of the sport in the country. The mother body has donated 24 golfing clubs to the Eswatini Nomads development programme in a presentation held at the Mbabane Golf Club on Thursday. The equipment has been donated by the international golf organisation known as the Royal and Ancient Golf organisation based in Scotland. EGU president Jacques Potgieter said this was part of their effort to promote the sport at the grassroots level. “We are pleased to deliver 24 golf clubs to be disbursed in the various member clubs across the country. This will help development coaches to nurture talent, and we believe the equipment will help us chieve this goal,” he said. He further pledged support for the

development programs in the country. “We are committed to producing the best talent that will represent the country in major international competitions. We commend the effort made by parents and coaches in nurturing talent,” he said. Mbabane Club committee member Chazile Dlamini thanked the mother body for the gesture. “We are grateful for the support of the mother body, which plays a major role in developing the sport in the country,” she said. The Mbabane club development program is headed by professional player Meshack Zwane.



▲ Potgieter delivering his remarks.

Thoba Mazibuko in Cape Verde

ESWATINI Olymp Africa Centre director Thoba Mazibuko is currently out in Cape Verde attending the Erasmus+ Capacity-Building Workshop. The five-day workshop is organized by the Cape Verde Olympic Committee (COC) and financed by Olympic Solidarity in Praia. This was announced by the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association through a press statement. “Thoba Mazibuko is among representatives of African and South American Olympic Committees gathered in Cape Verde to strengthen their competencies in submitting projects to the Erasmus+ program. The workshop has brought together leaders from OlympAfrica Centers and National Olympic Committees across the continent to strengthen their capacity in resource mobilization and project sustainability. Communication Participants are gaining practical knowledge in proposal development, fundraising strategies, and effective communication with donors, all vital skills to ensure long-term growth of community-based sports and development initiatives,” the association said. The local Olympic movement further revealed that the workshop will promote the development of sport in the country. “Mazibuko’s participation represents a significant step towards expanding oppor-



▲ Olymp Africa centre Director Thoba Mazibuko. tunities for youth and communities through sport. Upon his return, he will share key takeaways from the meeting, which will help to unlock new avenues for partnerships and funding,” the association said.

Women race date revealed

ATHLETICS Eswatini continues to empower women in the country. The association will host the 2025 Women’s race on September 27,2025, at Ezulwini Handicraft market. The race will be sponsored by Spar Supermarkets, and details of the sponsorships will be revealed in due course. The race will have two categories, 10km and 4.1km, in a bid to discover new female road runners. AE announced the race through a press statement. Register “We are pleased to announce the women’s race which will take place next year and women runners are urged to register for the race in numbers,” the association said. Some of the female runners who will attend the race include Samkelisiwe Tfwala and Thobile Ngwenyama, among others. The next road running event will be the prestigious Imbube marathon to take place in October at Somhlolo National stadium. AE recently concluded its track season with the 2025 Confederation of African Athletics SADC regional championships held in Zimbabwe.



▲ Top female runner Samkelisiwe Tfwala in action during a local tournament.

‘Bull’ remains under Mamkhize’s watch

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

MBABANE Highlanders AM FC remains under the stewardship of South African businesswoman Shauwn ‘MaMkhize’ Mkhize.

The ex-Royal AM Boss will lead the capital city giants during the 2025 8Bet Trade Fair set to kick off next weekend at Mavuso Sports Centre, where the ‘Black Bull’ will take on Ezulwini United.

This follows the postponement of the matter to September 19, 2025, by Judge Titus Mlangeni on Thursday.

Mkhize is one of the respondents in the ongoing ownership wrangle with local businessman Bheki ‘Rubber’ Simelane, who is challenging the termination of his 18-month contract by the Patrons two months ago.

Simelane claims he is still in charge and wants to be reinstated as president and board governor in the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE).

He is also challenging Mkhize’s appointment as the club president in his prayers.

He further wants the suspension of the club’s operations of the club on an interim basis pending the finalisation of the matter.

The case was attended by a handful of supporters who were in support of Simelane on Thursday morning at the Mbabane Magistrate’s court.

Other respondents include the Patrons, Premier League of Eswatini and Eswatini Football Association.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders AM FC remains under the stewardship of South African businesswoman Shauwn ‘MaMkhize’ Mkhize.

‘Moz investor still on, agreement in place’

By Chris Dlamini

IS it an investment on paper only?

This is one of the million-dollar questions Mbabane Swallows supporters must be asking themselves amidst a raging leadership wrangle. Swallows is currently divided into two warring factions, to the point that there is Swallows FC and Swallows Pty, Ltd, and all factions have applied for CAF Licensing to play this season.

As this unfolds, money to run the club is the main subject among supporters. Doubt is currently dominant regarding the recently unveiled Mozambique investor, Donald Birage Enterprises, among the red and white supporters. Is there an investor or not?

Swallows FC Governor Welile Mabuza was asked this question on Wednesday and responded on national radio, EBIS.

“Our investor is still with us.

There is an agreement in place with him, lest that gets terminated,” he responded to the question amid all the doubts among supporters and some of the team’s management itself.

Mabuza was also specifically asked about the uncertainty concerning Donald Birage Enterprises especially given that players were still owed July salaries and now it is August, they must be paid again.

“The Board has alternatives to raise funds should there be a need. At the moment, the agreement between us and the investor is binding,” he said.

Mabuza seemed to reluctantly admit that there were doubts about the E3 million investment promised by Donald Birage Enterprises as he kept pointing to alternative means, and referring to the agreement that is yet to come into action.

“He brought us some Mozambique players. However, since we must sign five foreigners at the end of the day, they are still training and we will decide who we sign,” he explained.

plained.

However, these players also had a coach to come with, and that is Dario Monterio, but the latter never turned up for even one training session save for his unveiling.

Mabuza said there were disagreements between Monterio and their investor.

“The investor has since given us the all-clear to go for a local coach. As you know, Caleb Ngwenya is cute training the team,” he said.

Swallows’ Public Relations Officer (PRO) who was with Mabuza in the midweek Sport Show, said Ngwenya would soon be unveiled once all loose ends were tied with the under-fire management committee (MC).

Should a deal be struck with Ngwenya who left them last season after seeing they could not pay his salary, joining Moneni Pirates, it would be a second spell for him. Swallows last tasted a major title success under his guidance when they won the league two seasons ago.



We will make the country proud – Buffaloes ladies

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

LOCAL CAF Women champions league envoys, Young Buffaloes ladies, have vowed to make the country proud during the 2025 COSAFA women Champions League qualifiers.

This was revealed by the army side head coach Fisiwe Hlophe ahead of their fourth appearance in the regional qualifiers scheduled for University of Johannesburg stadium.

“We are confident that we will do well in the qualifiers following our extensive preparations. I have faith in my players that

they will come to the party in the tournament and do better than last year,” she said.

The army side will take on Gaborone United and Kick 4 Life in the regional qualifiers.

Buffaloes domestic record is astonishing after completing a 24-game league season with 221 goals scored without conceding.

The club reached the semifinals of the previous edition of the regional qualifiers, which were held in Malawi.

They are also the champions of the inaugural Ingwenyama Cup women’s cup.

Debutantes Kick4Life Women FC of Lesotho complete the pool, and though untested at this level, they could influence who advances.





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terminates
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Sport



**‘Bull’ remains under
Mamkhize’s watch**

... Mbabane Highlanders AM FC remains under the stewardship of South African businesswoman Shauwn ‘Mamkhize’ Mkhize after on-going case postponed to September 19, 2025 by Judge Titus Mlangeni on Thursday. *Page 23*