



King orders rifles only for Butimba



By Thokozeni Mazibuko

HIS Majesty King Mswati III has made it clear that only rifles will be permitted for this year’s *Butimba* hunting expedition, issuing a directive that pistols are strictly prohibited. Delivering the King’s order on Sunday, *Indvuna* Qomentanyeni Magagula informed the assembled warriors at the Hlane Royal Residence that the use of pistols—referred to in siSwati as *umtfukuso*—would not be tolerated.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

EIPA invites
businesses to
exhibit at Taiwan
Food Show

Page 3



Collaboration between civil
society in helping the less
privileged, essential — DPM

Page 4



A Rubicon Media Group publication



eswatini
MOBILE

Your Affordable Network

Tertiary Student Bundle

Stay connected on campus with **Affordable Data Bundles** made just for you!

20GB
E100⁰⁰
VALID FOR 30 DAYS

120GB
E600⁰⁰
VALID FOR 6 MONTHS

Available daily from 12 AM – 7 PM
Currently live for UNESWA students only



By Thokozani Mazibuko

HIS Majesty King Mswati III has made it clear that only rifles will be permitted for this year’s *Butimba* hunting expedition, issuing a directive that pistols are strictly prohibited.

Delivering the King’s order on Sunday, *Indvuna* Qomentanyeni Magagula informed the assembled warriors at the Hlane Royal Residence that the use of pistols—referred to in siSwati as *umtfukuso*—would not be tolerated.

“*Kufuneka tibhamu tekutingela, hhayi umtfukuso*,” said the *Indvuna*, translating to “only hunting rifles, not pistols.”

Magagula emphasised that the *Butimba* is a traditional hunting expedition deeply rooted in Swazi culture, and therefore must be conducted with dignity and adherence to custom. The use of rifles is intended to maintain order, safety, and respect for the traditional exercise.

Following the announcement, warriors were instructed to immediately begin registering their firearms with the Royal Eswatini Police Service present on-site.

The registration process is meant to ensure that only approved hunting weapons are carried into the game reserve.

In addition, participants were ordered to prepare their sleeping arrangements for the duration of the *Butimba*.

The *Butimba*, commissioned by His Majesty, is one of the most significant cultural activities in the Swazi calendar. It brings together regiments of men led by the King for a hunting expedition in one of the nation’s game reserves.

While the hunt traditionally involves the

King orders rifles only for Butimba

... Pistols banned from the hunting expedition



▲ Prince Sicalo has also joined the warriors in the traditional hunting expedition Butimba which is deeply rooted in Eswatini culture.

killing of selected game, it is also regarded as a unifying cultural event that strengthens the bond between the monarch and his warriors.

By insisting on the exclusive use of hunting rifles, the King has underlined the seri-

ousness of the expedition while also prioritising safety. Pistols, often associated with personal defence rather than hunting, were deemed inappropriate for the cultural exercise.

The warriors, in high spirits despite the

stern reminder, continued their preparations under the watchful eye of their commanders.

As the hunt progresses, all eyes will be on the regiments as they honour an age-old tradition under the direct leadership of the King.

Prime Minister welcomes new U.S. Chargé d’Affaires

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini recently welcomed the new Chargé d’Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Eswatini, Marc Weinstock, marking a significant moment in the ongoing diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Eswatini and the United States.

The meeting, held at the Private and Cabinet Office, underscored the importance of the partnership and set a forward-looking agenda for cooperation.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Dlamini expressed his pleasure in receiving Weinstock, describing him as a person who “radiates a pleasant personality and vibrant energy.”

He acknowledged the commendable work of Weinstock’s predecessor, Caitlin Piper, noting that she “worked well with the current Administration of the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and successfully strengthened the relations between the two countries.”

The Prime Minister took the opportunity to wish Piper success in her new assignment, highlighting the continuity and goodwill that characterise the bilateral relationship.

Weinstock steps into his role at a pivotal time, as the current U.S. Administration introduces a new policy framework emphasising economic diplomacy. Prime Minister Dlamini emphasised that their discussions focused on “the opportunities that we can

seize working together to serve our countries as well as to further strengthen our relations.” Key areas identified for collaboration include food security, border surveillance, and disaster risk management, reflecting shared priorities that address both national and regional challenges.

The Prime Minister also touched on the recent reinstatement of critical health programs funded by USAID and PEPFAR, which are vital for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment in Eswatini.

He highlighted the importance of these programs in safeguarding public health and noted the arrival of third-country migrants from the U.S., indicating a broadening scope of engagement between the two nations.

Describing the United States as “one of the country’s most valuable diplomatic partners,” Prime Minister Dlamini underscored that the relationship is “based on mutual trust and respect for one another.”

He reaffirmed Eswatini’s commitment to fostering deeper cooperation that will bring tangible benefits to the peoples of both countries.

In a warm and encouraging conclusion, the Prime Minister addressed Weinstock directly: “To you, Chargé d’Affaires, seize the opportunity because time and chance have happened. Welcome to the Kingdom of Eswatini, the palace of Africa.”

This statement encapsulates the optimism and readiness of Eswatini to engage fully with the United States in a partnership that promises growth, stability, and mutual prosperity.

This meeting signals a renewed vigour in Eswatini-U.S. relations, with both sides



▲ Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini with new Charge’d’affaires of the US Embassy in Eswatini Marc Weinstock.

poised to explore new avenues of collaboration. The focus on economic diplomacy and critical social programs reflects a pragmatic approach to international relations, aiming to address immediate challenges while build-

ing a foundation for long-term partnership. The Kingdom of Eswatini’s openness and strategic engagement with the U.S. highlight its role as a key player in regional diplomacy and development.

EIPA invites businesses to exhibit at Taiwan Food Show

By Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) has issued a final call for local food and beverage companies to apply for space at the Kaohsiung Food Show 2025 (KFS), set for October 23-26, 2025, in Taiwan.

Applications close on Wednesday, August 27, 2025.

Selected firms will feature in the Eswatini Pavilion, organised in partnership with the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA). Applications can be submitted online via this link.

Trade fairs

KFS is among Asia’s leading food trade fairs, drawing over 320 exhibitors and 16,000 buyers in 2024. Exhibitors gain direct access to distributors, importers, and retailers across the Asian market.

“This is a final call for Eswatini food and beverage businesses to seize the opportunity

to access the Asian market, meet influential buyers, and showcase their products to thousands of international stakeholders,” said Thandeka Dlamini, EIPA’s Manager of External Trade Promotion.

Eswatini exporters also benefit from tariff cuts under the Eswatini-Taiwan Economic Cooperation Agreement (ECA). Bilateral trade hit US\$8.19 million in 2024, with exports up more than 29% since 2017. EIPA urges all eligible businesses to apply before the deadline and position their brands on this global stage.



▲ Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu at the Eswatini stall in Japan.



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo in the Eswatini stall in Japan.

Tourism sets stage for stronger Public-Private partnerships

By Delisa Magagula

TOURISM in Eswatini has found its voice again. The inaugural Tourism NKWE 2025 Indaba was more than a gathering of industry players.

It was a bold step toward a new era where government and business leaders work together to secure the sector’s future.

Hosted by the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Eswatini (HOTAES), in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA), the Indaba brought together policymakers, investors, and operators under one roof to chart the way forward for an industry still healing from the devastation of Covid-19.

Business Eswatini (BE), through its CEO E. Nathi Dlamini who directed the programme, steered the discussions with candid reflections on how the pandemic nearly dismantled the sector.

Dlamini reminded delegates of shuttered venues and mounting financial losses but also emphasized the resilience that carried businesses to this moment of revival.

“This is undoubtedly a very important gathering... in more ways than one,” Dlamini told participants, underscoring that the day was not just about recovery but about positioning tourism as a growth engine for the national economy.

That call was echoed by government leaders at the highest level. Prime Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini highlighted the importance of global partnerships, tying the growth of tourism directly to national goals of wealth creation and wellbeing.

Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg reinforced this by presenting tourism as a central driver of economic expansion, stressing the need for policies that build investor confidence.

Their message was that tourism is no longer a fringe sector but a cornerstone of Eswatini’s development strategy.

The Indaba also pointed to regional opportunities. The participation of the Botswana Tourism Organization opened the door to a Memorandum of Understanding that will promote shared standards and cross-border marketing. Such collaboration promises new prospects for Eswatini operators, from large-scale investors to small businesses aiming to expand their regional footprint.

For Business Eswatini, this was not just another event.

The organisation’s central role gave it the platform to align business priorities with government policy.

From advocating for policy reform to strengthening skills development and building strategic partnerships, BE is now positioned to ensure the resolutions from



▲ Business Eswatini (BE) CEO E.Nathi Dlamini.

Tourism NKWE translate into action.

The Indaba’s success lies in the model it showcased one where government, private sector, and regional partners work in unison. It demonstrated that collaboration, not competition, will drive the industry forward.



▲ New FNB Eswatini Board of Directors chairperson Elizabeth Arden.

FNB Eswatini appoints first woman board Chairperson

By Delisa Magagula

FNB Eswatini has appointed Elizabeth Arden as Chairperson of the Board of Directors, effective November 3, 2025.

Arden, a Swati, becomes the first woman to hold the role in the bank’s 30-year history in Eswatini. She succeeds outgoing Chairperson Joseph Vusumuzi Ndlangamandla, who will retire following the Annual General Meeting scheduled for October 2025.

Ndlangamandla has served the bank for nine years, providing leadership and commitment to corporate governance and strategic oversight.

During his tenure, he played a central role in strengthening the Board’s effectiveness, enhancing stakeholder confidence, and guiding the bank through key phases of growth and transformation.

The bank expressed appreciation for his service and contributions. Arden is currently Chairperson of the Audit Committee and has been a member of the Board since 2018.

Compliance

She is a Chartered Accountant and accomplished executive with more than 30 years of experience in finance, credit, risk management, compliance, and strategic leadership within the banking and agricultural sectors.

She has held senior roles including Chief Financial Officer, General Manager, and Executive Director, with a strong record in turnaround strategies, regulatory compliance, and financial restructuring.

Commenting on her appointment, Arden said she was humbled by the appointment and was looking forward to excelling.

“It is a great honour to be entrusted with this role, especially as the bank celebrates 30 years of achievements. In the past 30 years, the bank has been led by incredible stewards who demonstrated commitment and courage,” she said.

In addition, she said she feels fortunate to be taking over from a seasoned chairman who leaves the bank on a solid platform, with a highly competent board supported by an equally skilled management team.



▲ Eswatini Baphalali Red Cross Society's Danger Nhlabatsi.



▲ Former Ndzingeni Member of Parliament and Philani Maswati Chrity Organisation Chairman Lutfo Dlamini

Collaboration between civil society in helping the less privileged, essential – DPM

By Thokozani Mazibuko

PHILANI Maswati Charity Organisation in partnership with Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) have joined hands to serve the less privileged by launching a clothing collection campaign otherwise known as the Siphila Nabo National Clothing Collection Campaign.

The Siphila Nabo National Clothing Collection Campaign was officially launched by the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Thulisile Dladla at the Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society Warehouse in Matsapha on Monday.

Making her remarks during the launch, the DPM, who spoke through the voice of the Principal Secretary (PS) in the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) Siboniso Nkambule, thanked the partners and sponsors for their collaboration and dedication to this vital course.

"Appreciation also goes to our logistics and production partners, Freightlux and Eswatini Plastic Industries for supporting the collection, transportation and branding efforts," she said.

The DPM said the Siphila Nabo National Clothing Campaign embodies the spirit of solidarity and compassion that defines the nation.

She pointed out that by collecting and distributing new and gently used clothing, they aim to uplift vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly and those affected by hardships or disasters, promoting dignity and social coercion.

"This campaign also supports environmental sustainability through the use of

eco-friendly collection bags and the reuse of clothing contributing to responsible consumption," she said.

The DPM mentioned that the DPMO still supports the collaboration amongst civil society, humanitarian agencies, corporate partners and communities in driving this initiative.

"Collective action like this campaign aligns with our national priority to reduce poverty, protect vulnerable groups of population and foster inclusive development," she said.

The DPM encouraged every citizen, institution, and corporate entities to actively participate in the campaign, stating that their contribution and volunteer efforts can significantly improve the lives of many Emaswati.

"Let us embrace this opportunity with generosity and commitment to ensure the campaign's success throughout the month of September. Together we can make a profound difference by ensuring that no one in the Kingdom of Eswatini is left without adequate clothing, especially as seasons changes.

"May the Siphila Nabo National Clothing Collection Campaign be impactful, far-reaching and a beacon of hope for all beneficiaries" the DPM said.

The Chairman of Philani Maswati Charity Organisation, Lutfo Dlamini stated that this campaign was an effort to give every Liswati an opportunity to lend a helping hand to the less privileged.

"We have a tendency of seeking help from international organisation as Emaswati but this campaign for Emaswati to help one another, he said.

She pointed out that those who were going to distribute plastic bags engraved Siphila Nabo National Clothing Collection Campaign, produced by Eswatini Plastic Industries, where Emaswati will drop the clothes.

He said the plastic bags will be distributed across the country four regions where there

is Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society offices and Clinics, ADRA, and Philani Maswati offices.

He said once the clothes have been collected, they will then be transported by Freightlux to Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society Warehouse in Matsapha, where they will be washed, ironed and distributed to the needy.

Dlamini mentioned that the Campaign throughout the month of September.

"We anticipate that by the end of September, we would have collected enough clothes," he said.

Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society, Secretary General (SG) Danger Nhlabatsi said the event marked a moment of solidarity, compassion, and unity of purpose, as the three organisations namely, Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross, ADRA, and Philani Maswati joined hands to serve their communities in times of need.

He stated that this campaign was not only about collecting clothes.

"It is about partnership. It is about demonstrating that when organisations pool their strengths, resources, and networks, they can reach further and touch more lives. Together, we represent the spirit of collaboration that is essential if we are to respond effectively to the vulnerabilities faced by many families in Eswatini," Nhlabatsi said.

Nhlabatsi pointed out that clothing was often overlooked when people think of humanitarian response, yet it was one of the most immediate and personal needs for people affected by disasters, emergencies, or poverty.

He said proper clothing restores dignity, protects against certain elements, and gives people the confidence to rebuild their lives.

"By donating clothing, we are not just giving fabric; we are giving warmth, dignity, and hope. We are also bringing a smile to the needy people," said Nhlabatsi.

He said this campaign calls upon the generosity of every Liswati.

"Each one of us has clothing in good condition that we no longer use. Instead of keeping them in our wardrobes, let us share them with those who need them most, the disaster affected households, the orphaned child, the vulnerable families, the elderly grandmother, or the young man trying to get back on his feet," he said.

He said as organisations, they commit to handling these donations with transparency and accountability.

He stated that the clothes collected will be sorted, distributed, and monitored to ensure they reach those in genuine need.

"Together, Red Cross, ADRA, and Philani Maswati will ensure that this campaign delivers tangible and meaningful impact," he said.

Nhlabatsi said on Monday they were planting the seed of compassion, but its fruits will only be realised if they all take part.

He, therefore, called upon households, schools, churches, businesses, and individuals across the Kingdom to support this campaign.

"Let us be reminded that giving is not about abundance, but it is about love and solidarity. I thank our partners ADRA and Philani Maswati for walking this journey with us. I thank all of you for your presence, and I invite you to join us in making this campaign a success," Nhlabatsi said.

“Let us embrace this opportunity with generosity and commitment to ensure the campaign's success throughout the month of September.”

”

Drink-driving suspect assaults cop, arrested

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

A motorist, who was driving a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of alcohol without displaying the registration plate, has been arrested for refusing to provide his breath specimen and further assaulting a police officer.

Hakimi Mthupha (35) of Ngonini area appeared on Monday before Principal Magistrate David Khumalo at the Manzini Magistrates Court, charged with six counts of contravening the Road Traffic Act of 6/2007 namely; drink-driving, refusing to provide a breath specimen, failure to produce a driver's license and driving an unlicensed motor vehicle.

He was further slapped with further charges of driving a motor vehicle without displaying the registration plate as well as

resisting arrest and further assaulting a police officer.

He committed the offences on August 23, 2025 at Tri-Cash area in Sidvokodvo, while driving a Honda Fit sedan registered PSD 889 CM.

He pleaded guilty to all the counts and he was found guilty as charged after the Crown chose to accept his plea without leading evidence to prove the commission of the offences.

He mitigated for a lenient sentence on

grounds that he was remorseful about his behaviour. "I am sorry for what I did as it was a mistake," he said.

Mthupha further mentioned that he had two children to maintain.

He was sentenced to two years in prison on the first count of drink-driving, with an option of a fine of E5 000.

On the other five counts, he was sentenced to six months in prison with an option of a fine of E800 on each count.

A drink-driver has been arrested after throwing himself onto a fence in a bid to evade arrest.

Kido Shika Sikhondze, of Ludzeludze area, who appeared before Principal Magistrate David Khumalo at the Manzini Magistrates Court yesterday, was charged with four counts of contravening the Road Traffic Act of 6/2007. He committed all these offences on August 24, 2025 at Ludzeludze-Sibayeni along D 36 public road, while driving a VW golf sedan registered DSD 151 DM.

On the first count, he was charged with drink-driving and the particulars of this offence was that he had a very strong smell of alcohol emanating from his mouth, he was staggering and could not stand firm on the ground and that the pulled off from the roadway upon seeing the police motor

DD suspect throws himself onto fence trying to evade arrest

vehicle and threw himself onto a fence in a bid to evade arrest.

He was further slapped with refusal to provide his breath specimen when required to do so by the police, driving an unlicensed motor vehicle, failure to produce a valid driver's licence and driving an unroadworthy motor vehicle.

Sikhondze pleaded guilty in all four counts, and he was found guilty as per his own plea.

He mitigated for a lenient sentence since he had children to maintain.

He was sentenced to two years in prison with an option of a fine of E5 000 on the charge of drink-driving, while on the other three counts, he was sentenced to six months imprisonment with an option of a fine of E800 on each count.



▲ Jail cell.

WHO calls for collective action to end social injustice

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has urged governments, institutions, and individuals across the globe to take deliberate and coordinated steps in addressing social injustice, emphasizing that building fairer and healthier societies requires the participation of everyone.

In a statement released on Monday, WHO highlighted the urgent need to confront persistent inequalities that continue to disadvantage vulnerable populations worldwide. According to the organization, disparities in access to healthcare, education, housing, and decent employment remain some of the biggest challenges undermining human development and well-being.

"Ending social injustice requires determined action from everyone. Here are three things you can do: speak up against discrimination, support community organizations that provide essential services like food, supportive housing, and job training, and engage in climate action," the WHO statement read.

Tackling discrimination at all levels

WHO stressed that silence in the face of discrimination only fuels inequality. Acts of prejudice based on race, gender, disability, social class, or other identities contribute significantly to the widening social gap. By speaking out, individuals help challenge systemic biases and promote inclusivity in workplaces, schools, and communities.

It should be noted that health experts have long argued that discrimination does

not only hurt emotional well-being but also directly affects physical health, limiting access to services and creating stress-related illnesses.

Strengthening communities through support

The organization also emphasized the importance of supporting grassroots initiatives and community-based organizations. These groups often serve as the first line of response for families in crisis, providing essentials such as food, safe housing, and employment opportunities.

WHO noted that such services are crucial in breaking cycles of poverty and ensuring that marginalized populations can regain dignity and independence. Studies conducted by global development partners have shown that community-driven programs are among the most effective in reducing inequality and fostering social cohesion.

Climate justice as social justice

In its statement, WHO linked climate action to the fight against social injustice. Vulnerable communities, particularly in developing nations, bear the heaviest burden of climate change despite contributing the least to the crisis. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and resource scarcity disproportionately impact the poor, worsening health risks and economic instability.

"Climate justice is social justice," WHO reiterated, encouraging citizens to actively participate in sustainable practices and



▲ The World Health Organisation (WHO) logo is seen near its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland,

policy advocacy that reduce environmental harm while protecting the most at-risk populations.

A call for global unity

The organization concluded by reminding the world that dismantling social injustices is not the responsibility of governments alone.

Instead, it requires collective engagement—from individuals making everyday choices, to civil society movements, and policymakers crafting fair systems.

It is worth mentioning that as the world grapples with inequality, climate crises, and health challenges, WHO's call serves as a timely reminder that meaningful change begins with action at all levels of society.

Two admitted to E100 000 bails for E2mln airtime theft

Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE High Court has granted bail to two men accused of stealing airtime worth over E2 million.

The duo, Siwakhile Makhosini Mpanza (30) and Lungelani Sakhile Mabuza (36), were each admitted to bail of E100 000 by Judge Ticheme Dlamini despite opposition from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Mpanza and Mabuza were arrested on August 4 and charged with two counts of theft and two counts of contravening the Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2011.

They were remanded at Sidwashini Correctional Facility prior to the bail ruling. Under the bail conditions, each man must pay E20 000 in cash and provide surety of E80 000.

Their lawyer, Sibonginkosi Jele, argued that the accused were innocent until proven guilty and maintained that they had a credible defence. He further submitted that were citizens of Eswatini, had cooperated with investigators, and were unlikely to abscond.

Mpanza also raised medical concerns, telling the court he suffered from high blood pressure and that conditions at the facility



▲ High Court of Eswatini.

were not suitable for his health. Both men assured the court they were willing to comply fully with any bail terms imposed. In granting bail, the court ruled there was no evidence that releasing them would

endanger public safety, interfere with investigations, or undermine the justice system. The matter will now proceed to trial, where the accused must continue observing their bail conditions.

Four face trial for fraudulent land sales

FOUR individuals have been charged in the Mbabane Magistrate's Court over a series of alleged fraudulent land sales valued at E409 500.

The accused are Themba Mduduzi Gwebu (35) of Manzana, Jacob Dumsani Ndlangamandla (64) of Nkwalini Zone 3, Siyancoba Ncedile Dlamini (30) of Mvutjini, and Olivia Nomsa Dlamini (72) of Manzana.

They face eight counts of theft by false pretences, allegedly acting individually and collectively to defraud unsuspecting buyers.

The charge sheet details how the accused allegedly misrepresented themselves as land sellers, targeting people in Mbabane and Manzini between 2022 and 2024.

Property

Joyce Dube, who paid E25 000 in February for land at Mahwalala, later discovering it was not for sale. Delsile Ngwenya, defrauded of E76 000 the same month over land at Manzana. Mathatha Temple Gama, tricked twice in 2024 he paid E40 000 for land at Sidwashini, and again in January 2024, when he lost E50 000 for a fictitious property at Manzana. Ntombi Seyama, defrauded of E27 500 in 2022 by Gwebu, who posed as a property agent. Teresa Khetsiwe Dlamini, who lost E27 500 in 2022 over land in Manzini Zone 1. Nondumiso Precious 'Nokwanda' Dlamini, who in October 2022 lost E113 500 in a fraudulent Manzana land sale. Sydney Matewu Nkambule, who in May 2024 paid E50 000 for land at Sidwashini.

The court ordered Ndlangamandla to remain in custody until August 29, ahead of trial on September. A warrant of arrest was also issued for Gwebu, who failed to appear.

Russian man fined for illegal entry

A 43-year-old Russian national, Marat Iarkov, has been fined for entering Eswatini without following immigration procedures.

Iarkov was arrested at the Lavumisa Border Post after failing to have his passport stamped on entry, an offence under Section 14 (2)(c) of the Immigration Act 17 of 1982.

He appeared before Senior Magistrate Jabulani Maphalala at the Nhlangano Magistrate's Court, where he pleaded guilty

and represented himself. Crown prosecutor Sakhile Hlophe told the court that Iarkov was a first-time offender.

Leniency

In his plea for leniency, Iarkov described himself as single, childless, and a self-employed web developer.

He asked the court not to impose a harsh penalty. The magistrate sentenced him to pay a fine of E500 or serve five months' imprisonment in default of payment.



▲ Nhlangano Magistrate's Court entrance where Russian national, Marat Iarkov's case was heard.

Master's probe report to be finalised by September 30

THE Judicial Commission of Inquiry investigating the operations of the Master of the High Court is expected to complete its report by September 30, 2025, according to Registrar of the High Court Nosipho Mazibuko.

A government gazette recently extended the deadline. Initially, the Commission was to finalise its findings in March 2025, but it requested a three-month extension which expired in June.

The latest gazette now sets September 30 as the new target date. The inquiry was appointed by Chief Justice Bheki Maphalala in January 2024, following concerns raised during Sibaya about alleged irregularities and corruption within the Master's Office.

Beneficiaries had complained for years of difficulties in accessing estates of deceased relatives, with millions of

Emalangeni allegedly misappropriated by officials.

Public submissions described the office as incompetent, hostile, and resistant to assisting beneficiaries, prompting calls for a complete overhaul.

Deputised

The Commission is chaired by former Supreme Court Judge Majahenkhamba Dlamini, deputised by High Court Judge Mzwandile Fakudze. Other members include Industrial Court Judge President Sifiso Nsibande, High Court Judge Maxine Langwenya, and Industrial Court Judge Lorraine Hlophe.

The Secretary is Deputy Supreme Court Registrar Sipiwo Masuku, who is also a lawyer. The findings are expected to shape possible reforms within the Master's Office and could hold individuals accountable for alleged misconduct.

START YOUR DAY IN THE KNOW WITH CURRENT NEWS!

Keep yourself updated with recent going-ons by subscribing to **Eswatini Financial Times** and **Eswatini Sunday**. They are conveniently delivered to your doorstep.

REQUIRE OUR PRODUCT DELIVERED AT YOUR OFFICE? NO WORRIES, WE CAN ARRANGE THAT!

Reach out to our Subscriptions Team today and begin your subscription journey!

Contact us @ (+268) 7912 8965

You have read the rest, now read the best

BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Trade recognised as the backbone of Eswatini's economy

THE Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Melusi Masuku, has emphasised that trade continues to play a central role in sustaining and growing Eswatini's economy. Masuku was speaking at the World Customs Organization (WCO) National workshop on basic rules of origin for Eswatini customs and other government officials.

Dollar edges higher after slump on Powell's dovish surprise

MUMBAI — The dollar nudged higher against major currencies on Monday, stabilising after a steep fall last week that followed remarks from Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell that raised expectations of a rate cut next month. The euro declined 0.2 per cent to \$1.1693, pulling back from a four-week high of \$1.174225 touched on Friday. Sterling and the Swiss franc were each down 0.1 per cent.

Oil prices edge up as traders weigh supply risks

LONDON — Oil prices climbed on Monday as traders weighed concerns that Russian supply could be disrupted by more U.S. sanctions and Ukrainian attacks targeting energy infrastructure in Russia. Brent crude futures rose 40 cents, or 0.6 per cent, to \$68.13 by 1200 GMT, and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures gained 44 cents, or 0.7 per cent, to \$64.10.

CBE records decline in profit despite stable financial system

By Delisa Magagula

THE Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has reported a drop in profitability for the 2024/25 financial year, with profit falling to E205.7 million from E251.5 million in the previous year.

This is according to the Bank's latest Integrated Report, delivered by Governor Dr. Phil Mnisi, which outlined key performance highlights and developments in the financial system.

Dr. Mnisi acknowledged the decline but stressed that the overall financial sector remains resilient, supported by sound regulation and adequate capitalisation across domestic banks.

He added that the CBE's mandate of ensuring financial stability, effective monetary policy, and the integrity of the national payments system remains firmly on track despite external and domestic pressures.

The report noted that annual headline inflation averaged 3.9 per cent during the 2024/25 financial year, down from 4.7 per cent in the previous year. For the 2024 calendar year, inflation averaged 4.0 per cent compared to 5.0 per cent in 2023. At the close of the financial year, inflation had moderated further to 3.8 per cent.

The decline in inflation was attributed to a combination of easing food and fuel prices and improved domestic supply conditions.

The Governor noted that stable inflation was critical in supporting household purchasing power and maintaining the competitiveness of local industries.

Gross official reserves grew by 16.5 per cent, rising from E7.8 billion in March 2024 to E9.1 billion by March 2025.

However, despite this increase, import cover slipped slightly to 2.1 months compared to 2.2



▲ CBE Governor Dr. Phil Mnisi.

months the previous year.

Dr. Mnisi explained that while the Bank successfully built up reserves during the year, rising import levels placed pressure on the import cover ratio.

He said the Bank continues to prioritise maintaining adequate reserves to meet international obligations and support investor confidence.

The report highlighted that domestic banks demonstrated stability throughout the year, supported by a strong capital base that exceeded regulatory requirements.

This resilience, the Governor said, ensured that the banking system remained sound, even in the face of global economic uncertainties.

"The strength of our banking system is a reflection of prudent regulation and effective risk management. Our financial institutions remain well-capitalised and continue to play a key role in supporting economic activity," Dr.

Mnisi stated.

A major development in the year under review was the progress of the National Payments Switch Project. The first phase, the Fast/Instant Payments Module, went live in December 2024. By the end of March 2025, five participating institutions were live on the system.

Mnisi described the project as a transformative step for the country's financial system, enabling faster, safer, and more efficient payments.

He said the CBE would continue to expand the system to cover more financial institutions and broaden its functionality in the coming year.

The CBE also confirmed that the supply of currency remained stable throughout the year. All cash withdrawal requirements from commercial banks were met, ensuring that demand for high-quality currency notes and coins was fully satisfied.

This was achieved through close monitoring of currency circulation and timely interventions to replenish supply where needed.

While the profit decline was a notable feature of the report, Dr. Mnisi reiterated that the Bank's financial position remained strong and sustainable. He emphasised that the focus was not only on profitability but on fulfilling the Bank's broader mandate of price stability, financial integrity, and support for economic growth.

"The decline in profit reflects the realities of the environment we are operating in. What is important is that the Central Bank remains financially sound, our systems are robust, and we are meeting the needs of the economy and the people of Eswatini," he said.

He concluded by reaffirming the CBE's commitment to strengthening financial stability, supporting innovation in the payments system, and ensuring that the Bank continues to safeguard the economy against both domestic and external shocks.

By Delisa Magagula

THE ratio of Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) in Eswatini's banking sector rose marginally to 7.2 per cent during the 2024/25 financial year, underscoring the delicate balance between expanding credit and managing risk.

According to the latest banking sector results, the rise was modest, indicating that overall credit risk management remains stable despite on-going economic pressures.

Total loans issued by the banking sector increased by 14.1 per cent to reach E18.48 billion. This expansion in credit supported households and businesses but also added to the sector's exposure, reflected in the slight increase in NPLs.

Deposits grew by 12.9 per cent to E21.89 billion, showing continued trust in the banking system and steady inflows of funds.

The rise in both loans and deposits demonstrates a healthy cycle of financial intermediation, where the public places savings with banks that are then channelled into productive lending.

Overall balance sheet growth remained

Banking sector assets grow past E31bln

strong, with sector assets rising 11.4 per cent to E31.43 billion. This growth was supported by increased lending activity and a stable deposit base. The expansion highlights the role of the banking sector in financing the economy and maintaining financial intermediation during a year of global uncertainty.

The loan-to-deposit ratio climbed to 84.4 per cent, indicating that banks are lending more relative to the deposits they mobilise.

While still within sustainable limits, the higher ratio points to tightening liquidity. Analysts note that this could place more pressure on banks to attract deposits in the coming year, particularly as credit demand continues to grow.

Despite tighter conditions, the liquidity ratio stood at 32.9 per cent. Though lower than in the previous year, this remains above the regulatory threshold, ensuring that banks have sufficient short-term assets to meet withdrawal demands.

The ratio provides comfort that the sector can handle liquidity shocks even as it extends more credit. The sector reported a 2.5 per cent decline in after-tax profits, closing the year at E142.5 million. Narrower interest margins and higher provisions for potential loan losses were

the main reasons for the dip.

While the reduction in profitability reflects the challenges of balancing growth and risk, the modest size of the decline suggests that banks remain resilient and financially sound.

The rise in the NPL ratio to 7.2 per cent was moderate compared to the expansion of lending activity, reflecting that most borrowers continue to service their loans.

Banking executives say the sector's focus on prudent lending practices and stronger monitoring frameworks has contained risks, even as the loan book expanded significantly.

Industry observers caution that maintaining this balance will be key in the coming year. Higher interest rates, inflationary pressures, and global market volatility could affect borrowers' repayment capacity, potentially placing further strain on loan performance.

Despite these pressures, the overall numbers point to a well-capitalised and resilient sector. Asset growth above 11 per cent, deposit growth near 13 per cent, and liquidity above regulatory minimums all signal that Eswatini's banks are well-positioned to withstand economic challenges.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.2040	17.6689
G.B. Pound	23.2871	23.9671
EURO	20.1485	20.7572
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90/Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	





▲Principal Secretary Melusi Masuku with delegates during training.

Trade recognised as the backbone of Eswatini's economy

By Delisa Magagula

THE Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Melusi Masuku, has emphasised that trade continues to play a central role in sustaining and growing Eswatini's economy.

Masuku was speaking at the World Customs Organization (WCO) National workshop on basic rules of origin for Eswatini customs and other government officials.

Masuku highlighted that trade is not only about the movement of goods across borders but a driver of employment, investment, and long-term national development.

The PS explained that Eswatini's economy is heavily reliant on its ability to access regional and global markets.

With a relatively small domestic market, the country depends on trade to generate revenue, expand industrial output, and create jobs for thousands of Emaswati.

He noted that over 70 per cent of Eswatini's goods are exported within the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), while preferential trade agreements with the European Union and the United States have provided local producers with critical market access.

"Trade is the lifeblood of Eswatini's economy. Without it, our industries would not be able to grow, and our people would not benefit from the opportunities that external markets bring," he said.

The Principal Secretary pointed to the sugar sector as a longstanding example of trade's impact on the country's economy.

Sugar remains Eswatini's largest export commodity, accounting for a significant share of foreign exchange earnings.

Beyond sugar, Masuku said the government is working to expand trade in manufactured goods, textiles, and agricultural products to diversify export earnings and reduce dependence on a single commodity.

He added that government policy is geared toward creating an enabling environment where businesses can thrive, produce competitively, and export sustainably.

This involves aligning Eswatini's trade policies with regional frameworks such as

the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is expected to unlock new opportunities for local producers to access larger markets across the continent.

Masuku also underscored the importance of infrastructure in strengthening the country's trading capacity.

Efficient transport networks, customs systems, and trade facilitation measures are essential for reducing the cost of doing business and improving competitiveness.

The government, working with partners, has invested in upgrading border facilities, streamlining customs procedures, and digitalising trade processes to make it easier for businesses to move goods in and out of the country.

"Trade facilitation is just as important as trade agreements. If goods cannot move quickly and cost-effectively, our competitiveness is undermined," he explained.

The Principal Secretary further highlighted that trade is not only about exports but also about imports that sustain industries and provide essential goods for the population.

Raw materials, machinery, and technology imports support local manufacturing, while consumer goods imports ensure that Emaswati have access to affordable products.

The balance between exports and imports, he said, is what sustains the economy and supports livelihoods.

Turning to the role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Masuku noted that the government is actively supporting smaller businesses to participate in trade. He acknowledged that many SMEs face barriers such as limited access to finance, lack of information about markets, and inadequate capacity to meet export standards.

Through initiatives under the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, the government is working with development partners to provide training, financing options, and market intelligence to ensure that SMEs are not left out of the benefits of trade.

"SMEs form the backbone of our economy in terms of employment. Helping them to trade, both locally and internationally, is a priority," he said.

Masuku also pointed to the need for private sector investment to complement government efforts. He encouraged businesses



▲Some of the Government officials during the workshop.

to take advantage of trade agreements and to explore new markets beyond the traditional partners.

He stressed that Eswatini's competitiveness will depend on its ability to produce goods that meet international quality standards while remaining cost-effective.

He recognised that while trade has brought many benefits, challenges remain. Fluctuations in global commodity prices, changes in trade policies in partner countries, and logistical constraints can all affect the flow of goods.

Climate change also poses a risk to agricultural exports, with droughts and extreme weather threatening key industries such as sugar and forestry.

Masuku assured stakeholders that the government is aware of these challenges and is working to put in place resilience measures that will safeguard the economy.

On regional integration, the Principal Secretary described Eswatini's membership in SACU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as central to its trade strategy.

These platforms provide Eswatini with preferential access to neighbouring markets and allow for harmonisation of standards

and policies that ease cross-border trade. He said the country is committed to playing its part in advancing regional trade agendas that benefit all member states.

In his concluding remarks, Masuku called for continued collaboration between the government, private sector, and development partners to maximise the benefits of trade.

He stressed that trade is not an isolated policy area but a cross-cutting driver of growth that touches on industry, agriculture, infrastructure, and social development.

"Trade remains the backbone of Eswatini's economy. Our task is to strengthen it, diversify it, and ensure that all our people benefit from it. With the right partnerships and continued investment in competitiveness, Eswatini will secure its place as a strong trading nation," he said.

The Principal Secretary's remarks come at a time when Eswatini is looking to accelerate economic recovery and growth.

By positioning trade at the centre of its development agenda, the government is sending a clear message that sustainable economic progress will be built on the country's ability to connect with regional and global markets.

Dollar edges higher after slump on Powell’s dovish surprise

By Jaspreet Kalra

MUMBAI — The dollar nudged higher against major currencies on Monday, stabilising after a steep fall last week that followed remarks from Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell that raised expectations of a rate cut next month.

The euro declined 0.2 per cent to \$1.1693, pulling back from a four-week high of \$1.174225 touched on Friday. Sterling and the Swiss franc were each down 0.1 per cent.

Major brokerages, including Barclays, BNP Paribas and Deutsche Bank, expect a 25-basis-point Fed rate cut in September following Powell’s remarks.

Expectations of policy easing and a slowing U.S. economy, alongside lingering worries about the U.S. fiscal position, are likely to exert pressure on the U.S. dollar, said Samy Chaar, chief economist at Lombard Odier.

Traders price in 85 per cent odds of a quarter-point cut on September 17, up from around 70 per cent before Powell delivered his speech, according to CME’s FedWatch tool.

Measured against a basket of six major currencies, the dollar has weakened by more than 9.5 per cent so far this year. The single currency has been the lead gainer in the basket with a near 13 per cent rise on the year.

Chaar expects the euro to strengthen to about \$1.20-\$1.22 over the next six-to-12 months.

Meanwhile, eurozone bond yields moved



▲U.S. dollar, Euro, Chinese Yuan, Canadian dollar, Turkish Lira and Pound banknotes are seen in this illustration.

higher on Monday, reversing a fall from late last week as traders reassessed their expectations for the U.S. Federal Reserve and the impact on Europe. They also processed data showing an uptick in German business morale.

Germany’s 10-year bond yield, the benchmark for the euro zone, rose 5 basis points to 2.77 per cent, nearing a five-month peak of 2.787 per cent hit last week.

U.S. Treasury yields were also slightly higher across the curve as traders calibrated positioning. The two-year Treasury yield, especially sensitive to interest rate expectations, was last up 2 basis points at 3.71 per cent.

Apart from the Fed’s policy path, investors are likely to stay focused on U.S. President Donald Trump’s attacks on Powell and

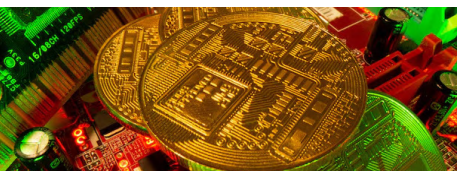
other Fed policymakers, which have raised concerns about the central bank’s independence.

“Renewed efforts to reshape the Fed present a potential challenge to longer maturities,” analysts at Goldman Sachs said in a note. The 30-year U.S. Treasury yield was last at 4.9050 per cent.

Upcoming data points include the Fed’s preferred inflation gauge, the PCE deflator, on Friday, and monthly payrolls figures for August, due a week later.

Elsewhere, the Chinese yuan leapt to the strongest level in a month, boosted by broad weakness in the dollar.

In cryptocurrencies, ether fell 5 per cent on Monday after touching a record high of \$4,955.14 over the weekend. Bitcoin was down about 1.5 per cent to \$111,197. (Reuters)



‘Regulators must crack down on tokenised stocks’

By Elizabeth Howcroft

A GROUP representing the world’s biggest stock exchanges has called on securities regulators to clamp down on so-called tokenised stocks, arguing that the blockchain-based tokens create new risks for investors and could harm market integrity, a letter seen by Reuters shows.

Tokenised equities are blockchain-based tokens created to represent shares in companies. The tokens represent ownership of the securities but investors do not become shareholders in the underlying company.

Crypto exchange Coinbase and broker Robinhood are among those making a push into the nascent sector that could shake up the securities investing landscape.

Proponents say tokenised equities can cut trading costs, speed up settlement and facilitate around-the-clock trading.

The World Federation of Exchanges (WFE), in a letter sent to three regulatory bodies last Friday, said it was concerned the tokens “mimic” equities without providing the same rights or trading safeguards. The letter was sent to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission’s (SEC) Crypto Task Force, the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), and global securities watchdog IOSCO’s Fintech Task Force.

“We are alarmed at the plethora of brokers and crypto-trading platforms offering or intending to offer so-called tokenised U.S. stocks,” the WFE, a UK-based industry association for exchanges and clearing houses, said in the letter seen by Reuters.

“These products are marketed as stock tokens or the equivalent to stocks when they are not.”

The WFE declined to name which brokers and trading platforms it was referring to.

Issuers of stock - the companies whose stock is being mimicked - could suffer reputational damage if the tokens fail, the WFE said. The WFE’s position reflects the concerns of market infrastructure players and the broader financial sector, WFE CEO Nandini Sukumar told Reuters, adding that some share issuers had expressed concerns to their exchanges.

Regulators should apply securities rules to tokenised assets, clarify legal frameworks for ownership and custody, and prevent them being marketed as equivalent to stocks, the WFE said. The SEC, ESMA and IOSCO did not immediately respond to requests for comment. An SEC commissioner said in July tokenised securities must still meet securities regulations.

In June, trading platform Robinhood launched tokenised equities for EU customers, and said it also planned to offer tokens representing shares in privately-held companies, including OpenAI.

OpenAI said in response that it did not endorse the tokens and was not involved in the offering. Coinbase is seeking permission from the SEC to offer tokenised equities to its customers, Reuters reported in June.

Robinhood and Coinbase did not immediately respond to requests for comment. (Reuters)

By Anna Hirtenstein

LONDON — Oil prices climbed on Monday as traders weighed concerns that Russian supply could be disrupted by more U.S. sanctions and Ukrainian attacks targeting energy infrastructure in Russia.

Brent crude futures rose 40 cents, or 0.6 per cent, to \$68.13 by 1200 GMT, and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures gained 44 cents, or 0.7 per cent, to \$64.10.

“The market is somewhat concerned that these peace negotiations are going nowhere,” said Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank.

“The market is looking for supply to exceed demand in the autumn months, but in the short term that’s being challenged by a potential geopolitical disruption.”

U.S. President Donald Trump warned again on Friday that he would impose sanctions on Russia if there was no progress toward a peaceful settlement in Ukraine in two weeks.

He has also said he may hit India with harsh tariffs over its purchases of Russian oil.

At the weekend, U.S. Vice President JD Vance said Russia had made “significant concessions” toward a negotiated settlement in the 3-1/2-year war.

Ukraine, which has repeatedly targeted Russian energy infrastructure during the war, launched a drone attack on Sunday that sparked a huge blaze at the Ust-Luga fuel export terminal, Russian officials said.

Oil prices edge up as traders weigh supply risks



▲A pump jack operates near a gas turbine power plant in the Permian Basin oil field outside of Odessa, Texas, U.S.

A fire at Russia’s Novoshakhtinsk refinery, caused by a Ukrainian drone attack, was burning for the fourth day on Sunday, the region’s acting governor said.

The refinery sells fuel mainly for export and has an annual capacity of 5 million metric tons of oil, or about 100,000 barrels per day.

Softening the worries about Russian supply disruptions was OPEC+’s reversal of a series of production cuts, which is adding millions of barrels to the market, Saxo Bank’s Hansen said.

Eight members of the oil exporters’ group

are scheduled to meet on Sept. 7, when they are set to approve another boost.

Investors’ risk appetite improved following Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell’s signal on Friday of a possible interest rate cut at the U.S. central bank’s meeting in September.

But despite that, both benchmark oil prices appear to lack momentum, said Priyanka Sachdeva, senior market analyst at brokerage Phillip Nova, adding that markets seem increasingly convinced that Trump’s tariffs will hit economic growth. (Reuters)

Intel warns US stake could hurt international sales, future grants

INTEL, opens new tab said on Monday that the U.S. government's 9.9% stake in the chipmaker could pose risks to its business, from potentially harming international sales to limiting its ability to secure future government grants.

The company laid out new risk factors in a securities filing after the government decided to convert \$11 billion in government grants into an equity stake in Intel, the latest extraordinary intervention in corporate America by President Donald Trump.

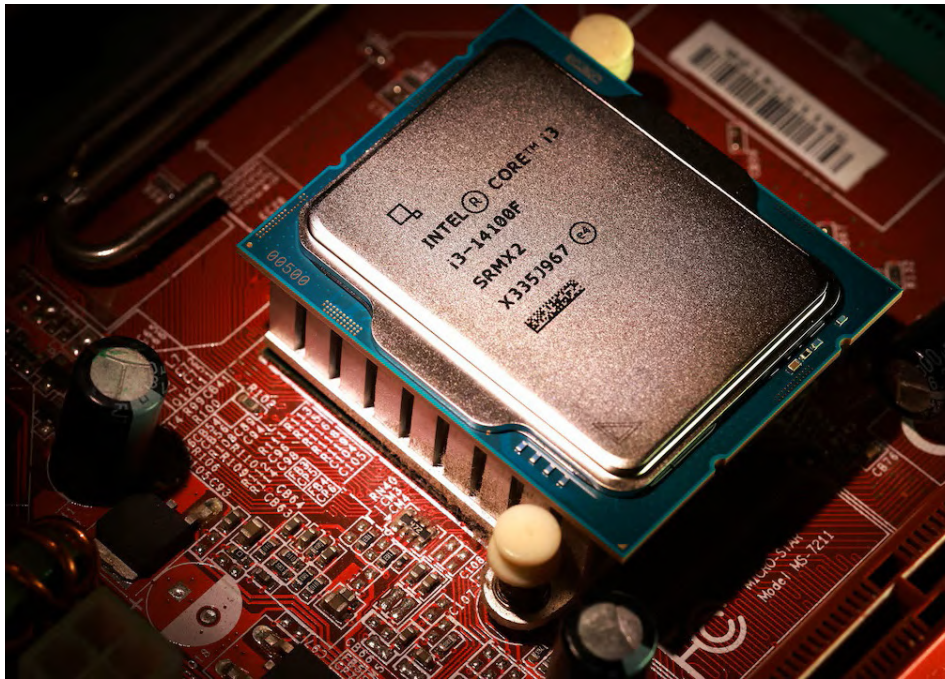
Separately, Intel CEO Lip-Bu Tan said in a video posted on Monday by the Commerce Department that the company did not need the government funding.

"I don't need the grant," Tan said. "But I really look forward to having the U.S. government be my shareholder."

But the filing from Intel raised questions about the U.S. investment. Intel noted, for example, that it is uncertain if the deal may result in other government entities trying to convert existing grants into equity investments or if they might be unwilling to support future grants.

Intel shares will be acquired with the \$5.7 billion in unpaid grants from the 2022 CHIPS and Science semiconductor subsidy law and \$3.2 billion awarded to Intel for the Secure Enclave program last year under Trump's predecessor, Democratic President Joe Biden.

"To the maximum extent permissible under applicable law," Intel's obligations under the CHIPS Act will be considered discharged, barring the Secure Enclave program, according to the filing.



▲ Intel processor is seen in this illustration.

Intel's non-U.S. business may also be impacted by the U.S. government being a significant stockholder as this could subject the company to additional regulations or restrictions such as foreign subsidy laws in other countries, the filing said.

Sales outside the United States accounted for 76% of its revenue last year while revenue from China contributed 29% to total revenue.

Trump's deal with Intel came after Tan had a meeting with the president, who had demanded Tan's resignation over his ties to Chinese firms.

The company also said the shares to be issued to the U.S. government at a discount to the current market price are dilutive to existing stockholders.

The government is purchasing Intel shares at a \$4 discount to Intel's closing stock price of \$24.80 on Friday. Intel shares rose 2% in early trading on Monday to \$25.25.

The government's substantial additional powers over laws and regulations impacting Intel may limit the company's ability to pursue transactions that benefit shareholders, the filing said.

The U.S. Commerce Department said on

Monday it was voiding an agreement finalized under President Joe Biden with an outside center to oversee \$7.4 billion in semiconductor research funds.

The department said the department's National Institute of Standards and Technology will assume operational responsibility for the National Semiconductor Technology Center from the private non-profit National Center for the Advancement of Semiconductor Technology (Natcast).

"We're moving from a pure capitalistic economy to a much more state-engaged economy. ... That's a huge change for America and over where we've been. I've never seen an era like this," said Bill George, former Medtronic CEO and executive education fellow at Harvard Business School.

"I will make deals like that for our Country all day long," Trump said in a post on Truth Social on Monday, touting the company's rising stock price.

Trump said in his post that he would help companies that make similar "lucrative" deals with U.S. states, but didn't provide details. Intel had promised to use the CHIPS Act money to build plants in the United States.

However, the risks of the government's involvement are no more apparent than in Intel's own regulatory filing on Monday, where it laid out several new risk factors to having the government invested in the company - from potentially harming international sales, to limiting the chipmaker's ability to secure future government grants, or subjecting the company to additional regulations or restrictions in other countries.

SpaceX postpones Starship test flight over ground system issue

ELON Musk's SpaceX on Sunday called off the launch of Starship's tenth mission from Texas over an issue at its launch site, delaying an attempt to achieve several long-sought development milestones missed due to past tests ending in early failures.

The 232-foot(70.7-meter)-tall Super Heavy booster and its 171-foot(52-meter)-tall Starship upper half sat stacked on a launch mount at SpaceX's Starbase rocket facilities as it was being filled with propellant ahead of a liftoff time of 7:35 p.m. ET (2335 GMT).

But roughly 30 minutes from liftoff, SpaceX said on X it was standing down to allow time to troubleshoot an issue with ground systems.

Musk had been poised to provide an update on Starship's development progress prior to the rocket's launch on Sunday, but a placeholder live stream indicated it had been cancelled.

Similar postponements in the past have been resolved in a matter of days. SpaceX is now targeting as soon as Monday, August 25, for Starship's next launch attempt, according to its website.

Development of SpaceX's next-generation rocket, the center of the company's powerful launch business future and Musk's Mars ambitions, has faced repeated hiccups this year.

Two Starship testing failures early in flight, another failure in space on its ninth flight, and a massive test stand explosion in June that sent debris flying into nearby Mexican territory have tested SpaceX's test-to-failure development approach.

Still, the company has continued to swiftly produce new Starships for test flights at its sprawling Starbase production facilities.

NASA hopes to use the rocket as soon as 2027 for its first crewed moon landing since the Apollo program.

The setbacks underscore the technical complexities of Starship's latest iteration, packed with far more capabilities such as increased thrust, a potentially more resilient heat shield and stronger steering flaps crucial to nailing its atmospheric reentry - key traits for Starship's rapid reusability that Musk has long pushed for.

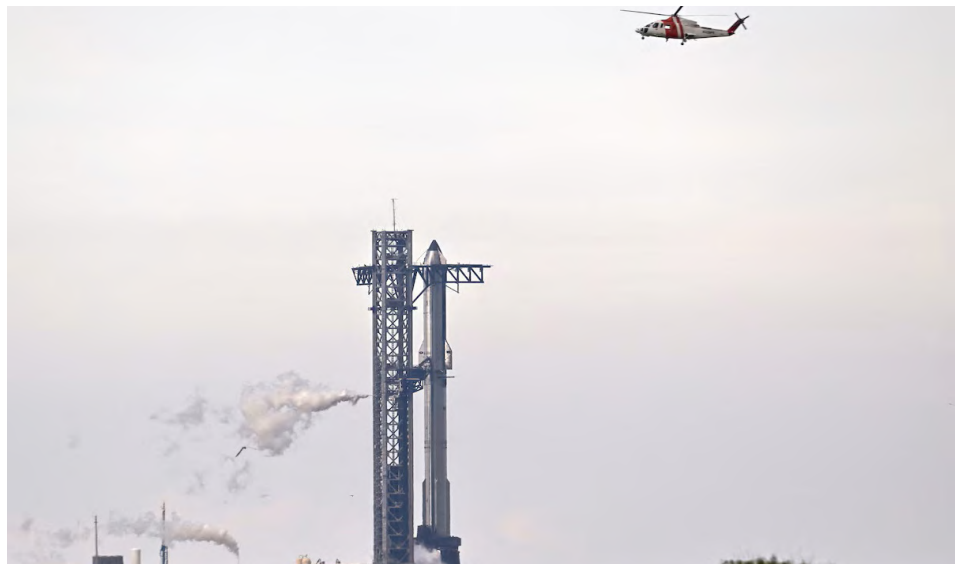
The stacked system had been expected to blast off from Texas around sunset on Sunday before its Starship upper stage separated from the Super Heavy booster dozens of miles in altitude. Super Heavy, which has returned for a landing at its launch pad in giant mechanical arms in past tests, would have instead targeted the Gulf of Mexico for a soft water landing in order to test a backup engine configuration.

Starship was to briefly ignite its own engines to blast further into space, where it would have attempted to release its first batch of mock Starlink satellites and reignite an engine while on a suborbital path around the planet.

After that phase, the ship targets an atmospheric reentry over the Indian Ocean, a crucial flight phase that tests a variety of prototypical heat shield tiles and engine flaps designed to endure a barrage of blazing heat that has largely shredded the rocket's exterior during past flights.

"Starship's reentry profile is designed to intentionally stress the structural limits of the upper stage's rear flaps while at the point of maximum entry dynamic pressure," SpaceX said on its website.

"Companies that are nationalized in



▲ A SpaceX Super Heavy booster carrying the Starship spacecraft vents before the launch is scrubbed to allow for troubleshooting of a ground issue at the company's launch complex in Starbase, Texas, U.S.

whole or in part don't do as well, because they're restricted from making the kinds of strategic decisions that would be solely market-based," said Nell Minow, chair of Portland, Maine-based ValueEdge Advisors.

The White House argues that the United States needs to develop more production capacity in critical industries rather than outsource that manufacturing to other countries.

Numerous CEOs met with Trump shortly after his re-election in November 2024, and that parade of visitors has continued into his term. It has yielded the likes of Apple CEO Tim Cook giving Trump a present of a customized souvenir plaque with a 24-karat gold base mined from Utah earlier in the month.

Apple - one of the biggest companies in

the world, with a market value north of \$3 trillion - has been trying to shift production away from China, which Trump targeted in his first-term trade war, to India, a move Trump has also criticized. Apple has announced roughly \$600 billion in planned investment in the United States, though the White House has suggested it could also build smartphones domestically.

The United States does not have significant capacity to make smartphones.

"I think companies are just starting to realize, how much control do you want to give up and how much ownership do you want to give up to the government?" George said.

Zimbabwe reintroduces maize import ban after bumper harvest

ZIMBABWE has brought back a ban on maize imports to boost local farmers, and has grown enough of its own this year to supply its millers after a bumper harvest, a senior agriculture ministry official said on Monday.

Zimbabwe, which consumes about 1.8 million metric tons of maize annually, saw production fall to around 800,000 metric tons in 2023/24 from 2.3 million metric tons two years earlier.

That crisis prompted the southern African government to temporarily lift import restrictions to ease food shortages.

Jiri said this year's recovery, combined with state support programmes such as the Pfumvudza smallholder scheme, has left the country with enough stocks.

Independent analyst Paul Chidziva warned that Zimbabwe's agriculture sector - which employs around 70% of the population - remains vulnerable to droughts and other extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change.

Improved rainfall boosted output and reversed a sharp decline last year when an El Nino-induced drought forced the country to rely on imports, including genetically modified maize.

"We assess the situation every day. We must protect local purchases from our local farmers," Obert Jiri, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, told Reuters.

The government is promoting drought-tolerant crops such as sorghum and millet. Jiri said the current surplus provides a rare opportunity to reinforce food security and reduce reliance on imports.

Zimbabwe spent \$300 million in scarce



▲ Subsistence farmer Joice Chimedza harvests maize on her small plot in Norton, a farming area outside Zimbabwe's capital Harare,

foreign currency importing maize in 2020 as successive droughts left more than half the population in need of food aid.

Zimbabwe, which consumes about 1.8 million metric tonnes of maize annually, saw production fall to around 800,000 metric tonnes in 2023/24 from 2.3 million metric tonnes two years earlier.

Enough stocks

That crisis prompted the southern African

government to temporarily lift import restrictions to ease food shortages.

Jiri said this year's recovery, combined with state support programmes such as the Pfumvudza smallholder scheme, has left the country with enough stocks.

Independent analyst Paul Chidziva says that Zimbabwe's agriculture sector - which employs around 70% of the population - remains vulnerable to droughts and other

extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change.

The government is promoting drought-tolerant crops such as sorghum and millet. Jiri said the current surplus provides a rare opportunity to reinforce food security and reduce reliance on imports.

Zimbabwe spent \$300 million in importing maize in 2020 as successive droughts left more than half the population in need of food aid.

Zimbabwe's maize consumption, which is around 1.8 million tons per year, fell to 800,000 tons in 2023/24, from 2.3 millions metric tonnes two years before.

The crisis led the government of southern Africa to temporarily lift import restrictions in order to alleviate food shortages.

Jiri stated that the recovery this year, coupled with the state's support programmes, such as the Pfumvudza Smallholder Scheme, has left the nation with enough stock.

Independent analyst Paul Chidziva warned Zimbabwe's agriculture sector, which employs 70% of the country's population, remains vulnerable to extreme weather events and droughts exacerbated by climate changes. The government promotes drought-tolerant plants such as millet and sorghum. Jiri stated that the current surplus presents a rare chance to strengthen food security and reduce dependence on imports.

(Reuters)

Botswana declares public health emergency as clinics run out of medicine

BOTSWANA'S President Duma Boko declared a public health emergency on Monday, saying the national medical supply chain had failed, leaving hospitals and clinics short of medicine and other vital stock.

Boko said the military would oversee an emergency distribution drive, and the first trucks would leave the capital Gaborone and head to remote areas by the evening.

"The medical supply chain as run by central medical stores has failed," Boko said in a televised address. "This failure has led to a severe disruption to health supplies countrywide."

The finance ministry had approved 250 million pula (\$17.35 million) in emergency funding for procurement, he added.

Botswana's budget has been constrained this year due to a prolonged downturn in the global diamond market - it is the world's leading producer of diamonds by value.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump has also cut funding that was supporting Botswana's health sector.

A spokesperson for Botswana's government did not immediately respond to questions about whether that had contributed to the crisis.

Boko said on Monday the price at which government procures medical supplies was inflated, and that existing distribution systems were causing loss, waste and damage.

In its statement on Aug. 4, the health ministry said it owed 1 billion pula to private health facilities and suppliers, which was compounding its challenges.

Medicines for hypertension, cancer, diabetes, tuberculosis, eye conditions, asth-



▲ Botswana's President Duma Gideon Boko attends the inauguration of Namibia's first female President, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah at the State House in Windhoek, Namibia.

ma, sexual reproductive health and mental health conditions were all running out, it said.

There were also shortages of dressings and sutures, it added.

The country's health ministry warned in early August it was running out of medicines and supplies due to unspecified financial challenges, and postponed all nonurgent surgery.

"The medical supply chain as run by central medical stores has failed," Boko said in

a televised address. "This failure has led to a severe disruption to health supplies countrywide."

The finance ministry had approved 250-million pula (R329m) in emergency funding for procurement, he added. Botswana's budget has been constrained this year due to a prolonged downturn in the global diamond market - it is the world's leading producer of diamonds by value.

The administration of US President Donald Trump has also cut funding that was sup-

porting Botswana's health sector.

A spokesperson for Botswana's government did not immediately respond to questions about whether that had contributed to the crisis.

Boko said on Monday the price at which the government procured medical supplies was inflated, and that existing distribution systems were causing loss, waste and damage.

(Reuters)

Wrongly deported migrant Abrego again detained by US immigration officials

KILMAR Abrego, the migrant whose wrongful deportation to El Salvador made him a symbol of President Donald Trump's hardline immigration policies, was again detained by U.S. immigration officials in Baltimore on Monday, his lawyer said, while facing the possibility of being deported again, this time to Uganda.

Abrego, 30, was deported in March despite a 2019 U.S. immigration court ruling that he not be sent back to his native country due to a risk of persecution by gangs. Abrego was flown back from El Salvador in June to face criminal charges of transporting migrants living illegally in the United States. He has pleaded not guilty.

He was released from criminal custody in Tennessee on Friday and returned to a family home in Maryland after more than five months of detention, including time in a mega-prison in El Salvador known for its harsh conditions.

But Abrego was detained again by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Monday upon reporting for an 8 a.m. interview, his lawyer Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg told reporters and Abrego's supporters outside the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency field office in downtown Baltimore.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem confirmed the arrest and said ICE is processing Abrego for deportation to Uganda.

U.S. officials have offered to deport him to Costa Rica - like El Salvador, a Spanish-speaking country in Central America - if he pleads guilty to the charges, according to

his lawyers. Without a guilty plea, Abrego could be removed to Uganda, an East African country that is "far more dangerous," his lawyers said in court documents filed on Saturday.

Abrego's lawyers acknowledged they have entered plea discussions with the government to possibly avoid deportation to Uganda.

Abrego is willing to accept refugee status in Costa Rica, Sandoval-Moshenberg told reporters.

"They're holding Costa Rica as a carrot and using Uganda as a stick," Sandoval-Moshenberg said. "They're weaponizing the immigration system in a way that's completely unconstitutional."

'ADMINISTRATIVE ERROR'

Abrego, a sheet metal worker who entered the United States without permission, had been living in Maryland with his wife, their child and her two children when he was arrested and deported earlier this year.

His wife and brother accompanied him to the interview at the ICE field office in Baltimore, and left the building about 45 minutes later without him, Reuters video showed.

Abrego also filed a lawsuit in federal court in Maryland seeking an order for him not to be deported anywhere unless he has had the chance to contest being sent there, Sandoval-Moshenberg said.

He is covered by a standing order in Maryland preventing immigrants challenging their deportations from being immediately deported, court records showed.

Greenbelt, Maryland-based U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis had previously ruled that authorities cannot deport Abrego to a country other than El Salvador without giving his



▲ Kilmar Abrego, the migrant whose wrongful deportation to El Salvador made him a symbol of U.S. President Donald Trump's aggressive immigration policies, attends an event with supporters as he appears for a check-in at the ICE Baltimore field office three days after his release from criminal custody in Tennessee, in Baltimore, Maryland.

lawyers 72 hours' notice so he can challenge his removal.

Abrego's case drew attention as the Trump administration for months took no apparent steps to bring him back despite an official's acknowledgement that his deportation had been an "administrative error" and a federal judge's order to facilitate his return.

His lawyers are also asking Nashville-based U.S. District Judge Waverly Crenshaw to

dismiss the criminal charges, saying he had been "vindictively and selectively" prosecuted out of Trump administration retaliation for challenging his previous deportation.

Crenshaw last month affirmed U.S. Magistrate Judge Barbara Holmes' order for Abrego to be released from pre-trial custody, finding he was neither a danger to the community nor a risk of flight.

(Reuters)

Israel hits Gaza hospital, killing at least 20 people, including 5 journalists



▲ Mourners carry the body of Palestinian cameraman Hussam al-Masri, who was a contractor for Reuters, after he was killed along with other journalists and people in Israeli strikes on Nasser hospital, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

ISRAEL struck Nasser hospital in the south of the Gaza Strip on Monday, killing at least 20 people, including five journalists who worked for Reuters, the Associated Press, Al Jazeera and others.

Cameraman Hussam al-Masri, a Reuters contractor, was killed near a live broadcasting position operated by Reuters on an upper floor just below the roof of the hospital in Khan Younis in an initial strike, according to Palestinian health officials.

Officials at the hospital and witnesses said Israel then struck the site a second time, killing other journalists, as well as rescue workers and medics, who had rushed to the scene to help.

The journalists killed included Mariam Abu Dagga, who freelanced for the Associated Press and other outlets, Mohammed Salama, who worked for Qatar-based broadcaster Al Jazeera, Moaz Abu Taha, a freelance journalist who worked with several news organisations including occasionally contributing to Reuters, and Ahmed Abu Aziz.

Photographer Hatem Khaled, also a Reuters contractor, was wounded.

Israel's military, the Israel Defense Forces, acknowledged striking the area of Nasser hospital and said the chief of the general staff had ordered an inquiry.

The IDF "regrets any harm to uninvolved individuals and does not target journalists as such. The IDF acts to mitigate harm to uninvolved individuals as much as possible while maintaining the safety of IDF troops," it said.

A Reuters spokesperson said in a statement: "We are devastated to learn that cameraman Hussam al-Masri, a contractor for Reuters, was killed this morning in Israeli strikes on Nasser hospital in Khan Younis in Gaza. Moaz Abu Taha, a freelance journalist whose work had been occasionally published by Reuters, was also killed, and photographer Hatem Khaled, a Reuters contractor, was wounded."

"We are urgently seeking more information and have asked authorities in Gaza and Israel to help us get urgent medical assistance for Hatem," the spokesperson added.

The AP said it was "shocked and saddened" to learn of the deaths of Abu Dagga and other journalists, adding that Abu Dagga had often based herself at the hospital for coverage, which recently included stories on starving and malnourished children.

The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate condemned Israel for the strikes, saying it represented "an open war against free media, with the aim of terrorising journalists and preventing them from fulfilling their professional duty of exposing its crimes to the world".

More than 240 Palestinian journalists

have been killed by Israeli fire in Gaza since the war started on October 7, 2023, according to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate.

Two weeks ago, Israel killed prominent Al Jazeera correspondent Anas Al-Sharif and four other journalists in a strike. In that attack, Israel acknowledged targetting Sharif and said that he worked for the Hamas militant group, which the broadcaster denied.

Witnesses said Monday's second strike took place after rescue workers, journalists and others had rushed to the site of the initial attack.

Masri operated a Reuters live video feed from the hospital, which suddenly shut down at the moment of the initial strike.

Reuters and other news providers often deliver live video feeds to media outlets worldwide during major news events to show the scene from the ground in real time. Reuters had frequently broadcast a feed from Nasser hospital during the Gaza conflict, and for the past several weeks had been delivering daily feeds from the Nasser hospital position that was hit.

Israel has barred all foreign journalists from entering the Gaza Strip since the start of the war in 2023. Reporting from the territory throughout the war has been produced by Palestinian journalists, many of whom have worked for many years for international media organisations, including wire services such as Reuters and the Associated Press.

Israel has also separately said it is investigating the death of Issam Abdallah, a Reuters journalist killed in southern Lebanon by Israeli tank fire in October 2023 after the Gaza conflict erupted. Israel has not announced any findings. (Reuters)



▲ Minister of Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs, Bongani Nzima making his remarks at the Ntjilo Ntjilo Arts Festival.

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

HIS Majesty Correctional Services (HMCS) Choir has once again demonstrated its musical prowess by successfully defending its title as champions at the Ntjilo Ntjilo Arts Festival, reaffirming its position as one of the region’s premier choral groups.

This year’s festival was marked by fierce competition among some of the country’s most talented choirs. Still, HMCS Choir’s outstanding performances in multiple categories secured top honours and significant prize money. In the Large Mixed Choirs category under the Western Rendition style, HMCS Choir delivered a captivating performance that earned them an impressive 95 points.

This score not only secured the championship but also awarded the choir a prize of E20,000. The Royal Eswatini Police Services choir finished as runners-up with 85 points, receiving E10,000, while the Manzini Choir took third place with 75 points and a prize of E8,000. The high scores reflect the intense preparation and dedication of all competing choirs, but HMCS’s polished delivery and musical precision set them apart.

The HMCS Choir’s success extended to the Large Mixed Choirs under the African Rendition category. Here, they scored 93 points, winning a prize of E15,000. The



▲ His Majesty Correctional Services (HMCS) Choir rendering one of their master pieces. They were the eventual winners of the arts festival.

HMCS Choir Ntjilo Ntjilo champs again



▲ Manzini Choir in their element.

Manzini Choir was a close second with 88 points and E13,000 in prize money, while the Royal Eswatini Police Services choir secured third place with 77 points and E10,000. This category showcased the rich cultural heritage and traditional musical styles of the region, with HMCS Choir’s

mastery of African renditions earning them well-deserved recognition.

In the Standard Mixed Choirs category under the Western Rendition, Pure Voices emerged as champions with 80 points, taking home E15,000. Sweet Sounds followed closely with 78 points and E8,000,

while Emmanuel Methodist Choir secured third place with 74 points and E6,000. These choirs demonstrated remarkable skill and harmony, contributing to a vibrant and competitive festival atmosphere.

The African Rendition segment of the Standard Mixed Choirs category saw Emmanuel Methodist Choir rise to the top with 84 points, earning E12,000. Sweet Sounds took second place with 78 points and E10,000, and Pure Voices completed the podium in third place with 8,000 Emalangeni. This category highlighted the choirs’ ability to blend traditional African musical elements with modern choral techniques, creating performances that resonated deeply with audiences and judges alike.

The Ntjilo Ntjilo Arts Festival continues to be a vital cultural event that celebrates the diversity and richness of Eswatini’s musical traditions. The success of the HMCS Choir at this year’s festival not only cements their legacy but also inspires other choirs to strive for excellence. Their back-to-back wins in both Western and African renditions underscore their versatility and commitment to artistic excellence.

... Ntjilo Ntjilo praised as platform for youth talent, socio-economic growth

THE 11th edition of the Ntjilo Ntjilo Talent Competition marked a significant milestone in Eswatini’s cultural calendar, drawing attention to the nation’s rich artistic heritage and the vibrant creativity of its youth.

The event, which began in 2015, has evolved into a vital platform for discovering and nurturing talent across diverse artistic disciplines, including poetry, secular music, traditional dance, and choral performances.

Speaking at the event, at Kwaluseni University of Eswatini, Minister of Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs, Bongani Nzima, expressed his deep pride in the competition’s evolution and its impact on Eswatini’s arts scene. “It is my great honour to join you at the 11th edition of the Ntjilo Ntjilo Talent Competition, a journey that began in 2015 with a simple yet powerful vision to discover, nurture, and celebrate the talent of emaSwati,” Nzima said. He highlighted how the competition

has become a bridge for young artists, exposing them to potential markets such as the internationally renowned Bushfire Festival and other global stages.

Nzima emphasised the competition’s role in shaping the country’s cultural landscape, noting that many of the young talents who started at Ntjilo Ntjilo have since thrived in the arts and cultural industries, making meaningful contributions to society. He remarked that the event has become essential not only for entertainment but also for socio-economic development, stating, “Ntjilo Ntjilo continues to demonstrate that the arts are not just about entertainment, but about solutions. It addresses socio-economic challenges by creating opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship, and stimulating economic growth.”

This year’s competition expanded its scope to include a broader range of participants, reflecting the diversity and richness of Eswatini’s cultural expressions.

Nzima pointed out that poets, secular musicians, traditional dance groups, and choral choirs all took part, showcasing the nation’s creative wealth. The theme chosen for this edition, “Climate Change,” was described by the minister as both timely and critical. He explained that through their performances, participants are engaging with global and local environmental issues, using art as a powerful medium for advocacy and awareness.

Arts

The minister also acknowledged the Eswatini Government’s strategic investment in the arts, particularly the establishment of regional arts offices. These offices have played an instrumental role in identifying and supporting talent across the country, improving access, and promoting inclusion. Nzima credited these regional initiatives as the foundation for the talent celebrated at the competition, emphasising the government’s commitment to nurturing

the arts sector.

In his closing remarks, Minister Nzima extended gratitude to all partners and sponsors whose contributions have been invaluable in sustaining the Ntjilo Ntjilo initiative. He also congratulated the organisers, participants, and communities for their dedication to keeping the platform alive and impactful. He expressed hope for the competition’s future, saying, “May Ntjilo Ntjilo continue to soar higher, shaping future generations of artists and change makers in Eswatini.”

The Ntjilo Ntjilo Talent Competition is a testament to Eswatini’s commitment to cultural development and youth empowerment. By providing a stage for emerging artists to shine and addressing pressing issues like climate change through creative expression, the competition not only celebrates talent but also fosters a sense of national pride, unity, and economic opportunity.

Eswatini International Trade Fair 2025: E200 000 sponsorship for culture, dance competitions

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

MINISTER of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima has officially announced the sponsorship details for the upcoming Trade Fair 2025 Culture Competition, highlighting significant support from Mulasport and the Kunotsa Foundation.

The sponsorship package allocates E150,000 for the Culture Competition and an additional E50,000 for the Dance Competition, signalling a strong commitment to fostering cultural expression and talent development in Eswatini. Speaking on behalf of the ministry, Minister Nzima emphasised the government's unwavering dedication to integrating culture into the country's broader development agenda.

"As a ministry, we remain resolute in our pledge to place culture at the centre of our national development plan," he stated. This declaration underscores the strategic importance the ministry assigns to culture not merely as a form of entertainment but as a vital component of economic growth and social cohesion.

Minister Nzima further elaborated on the ministry's collaborative vision, particularly its partnership with other government bodies and the Eswatini Institute of Public Administration (EIPA). He explained that the shared goal is to elevate culture to a professional and business-oriented platform accessible to all citizens.

"Our continuous shared vision with our ministries and with EIPA in particular is to present culture as a business and



▲ Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima has officially announced the sponsorship details for the upcoming Trade Fair 2025 Culture Competition.

professional option for everyone," he said. This approach aims to transform cultural activities into sustainable careers and viable economic ventures, thereby empowering artists and cultural practitioners nationwide.

Pivotal role

The minister also acknowledged the pivotal role of His Majesty's Government in prioritising culture through consistent budget allocations and policy support. "Once again, our achievement as a country in the global space is there for everyone to see. Thanks to His Majesty's Government for continuously putting value and budgets in the culture sector," Nzima remarked.

Looking ahead to the Trade Fair 2025, Minister Nzima expressed enthusiasm

about the event's potential to engage and inspire the nation. He conveyed the ministry's aspiration to create an uplifting experience for all participants, from exhibitors to visitors and especially the youth. "As we go to the Trade Fair, we want to put smiles on everyone, from exhibitors to visitors and youth in the country, to uplift the experiences for 2025 as an individual and group landmark," he said.

In closing, Minister Nzima extended a warm invitation to all Eswatini citizens to attend the Trade Fair and immerse themselves in the diverse cultural offerings. "We therefore invite the Nation in their numbers to visit the Trade Fair daily to consume our cultural experiences," he urged.

Shongwe & Khuphuka to bring gospel vibes at Umuthi Fest

THE excitement surrounding the second edition of Umuthi Fest continues to build as Eswatini's legendary gospel group Shongwe & Khuphuka has been officially added to the festival's lineup.

Scheduled for October 18, 2025, at Mavuso Trade Centre, Umuthi Fest is set to be an electrifying event. Mawelele's inclusion alongside renowned acts such as the popular South African duo Blaq Diamond, the soulful Mlindo The Vocalist, Mawelele, Big Zulu and the talented Naledi Aphiwe significantly elevates the festival's appeal.

Ticket sales have been robust, reflecting the growing anticipation for the event. Early bird general admission tickets are priced at E150, with pre-sale tickets available at E200 and gate tickets at E250. For those seeking premium experience, VIP tickets are offered at E400 for early birds, E500 during presale, and E600 at the gate. Shongwe & Khuphuka Saved Group, established in 1997 by Bishop Elias Shongwe in Khuphuka, Eswatini, is a distinguished gospel ensemble known for its authentic African sound. Over the years, they have released 26 albums, including the latest 'Khweshela Le (Maskandi version),' with many achieving platinum and gold status.

Their impactful ministry has extended globally, performing throughout Africa and internationally, including the United Kingdom. Highlights of their career include performing for His Majesty King Mswati III and appearances on prominent gospel



▲ Shongwe & Khuphuka Gospel Group.

platforms like the SABC Gospel Crown Awards and Gospel Gold.

The legendary group has earned numerous accolades such as Best Traditional Song at the Trumpet Africa Gospel Awards, SwaziTelecom Song of the Year, and the Eswatini National Arts

& Culture Life Achievement Award. They were the first gospel group from Eswatini to be featured on CNN and have received nominations for the South African Music Awards (SAMAs) and the SABC Gospel Crown Awards, establishing them as trailblazers in traditional gospel music.



▲ Obsession.

Obsession for Mlawula Campfire Festival

ESWATINI'S beloved DJ Obsession is set to entice the highly anticipated Mlawula Campfire Festival.

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

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

Event

The Mlawula Campfire Festival has also promised a comedy night which will feature African comedians Siyanda Maphumulo and Monkey Man. The event will also feature Eswatini stars Christian Dude, Bongiswa & Darren, Gogo & S'lwane.

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

For those seeking a more relaxed experience, the festival will offer yoga and aerobics sessions set against the tranquil backdrop of the reserve. These sessions are designed to help participants unwind and rejuvenate, fostering a sense of well-being and connection to nature. In addition to physical activities, the festival will feature workshops and demonstrations that highlight local crafts, cuisine, and cultural practices, allowing attendees to engage with the rich heritage of Eswatini.

Veteran actress Pamela Nomvete’s heartbreak over passport woes

ACTRESS Pamela Nomvete, known to millions of South Africans for her unforgettable role as the scheming Ntsiki Lukhele on the classic soapie *Generations*, has opened up about a painful and deeply personal battle, one that has left her questioning her place in the country she once came home to help rebuild.

In a heartfelt social media post, Nomvete revealed that she is currently unable to travel to South Africa due to passport issues, despite being a dual citizen.

Her South African passport expired this year, and efforts to renew it have led her down a bureaucratic rabbit hole.

“I am literally being told all over again to prove my South African citizenship,” she wrote.

Widespread recognition

Authorities are demanding documents from her late parents, including birth certificates and ID papers, to confirm what she already fought to prove back in 1994, when she returned to South Africa from exile to participate in the country’s first democratic

elections.

“I went to my ancestral land, South Africa, so I could vote for a black majority government,” Nomvete recalled.

“The South African government welcomed us exiles, happy for us to hold dual citizenship!”

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Nomvete gained widespread recognition for her powerful performances on South African television, where she portrayed one of the most iconic villains in soap opera history.

Her work in shows like *Isidingo* and later roles in British dramas also earned her international acclaim. Now, she finds herself in limbo. Because she holds both British and South African passports, she cannot travel on just one; both need to be valid, and the South African Department of Home Affairs is insisting she provide documentation that,

she argues, should already be on record.

“My parents are now on the ancestral plain, so I am unable to get these papers from them,” she said, pointing out the emotional absurdity of the request.

In a striking moment of reflection, Nomvete questioned whether international celebrities would face the same barriers.

“If Spike Lee, who has no immediate links to South Africa, applied for a passport, would they give him this runaround? I doubt it.

“He would most likely be met by [President] Cyril Ramaphosa on a red carpet,” she added. Despite her heartbreak, Nomvete remains defiant.

“I shall still fight to get my passport and be recognised as a dual citizen, a South African-British born in Ethiopia. Surely the world should be our playground.”

(Sunday World)



▲ Actress Pamela Nomvete.

Skeem Saam actor spreads his artistic wings to ‘cultural’ lekomo music

SKEEM Saam actor Mahlatsi Moropo is proving that he is much more than just a TV star.

The 24-year-old Limpopo native is spreading his wings into music, embracing lekomo- a genre that is not only close to his heart- but also deeply rooted in his culture.

During an exclusive sit-down with Sunday World Engage, Moropo, who plays Letetswe Kunutu in the soapie, opened up about his creative journey, his unshakeable belief in storytelling, and how lekomo is helping him carry the spirit of his province into the world.

Best known for his role in the hit SABC1 drama series, Moropo is a multi-talented artist. He is a choreographer, dancer, voice-over artist, and now a musician. For him, lekomo is not just another music style; it is a cultural vessel.

“Lekomo reminds me of the motswako era, when artists like HHP and Cassper Nyovest were telling stories of township life through music,” Moropo told Sunday World Engage.

Lekomo, a genre steadily gaining traction across Limpopo and beyond, is built on rhythm, storytelling, and indigenous lan-

gua-ges. For Moropo, its power lies in the way it blends cultures and identities while staying true to its origins.

“Through lekomo, we are saying Limpopo is not just one thing. We are a province of different cultures, different tongues, and different ways of life. This music gives us the space to tell those stories in our own languages,” he explained.

Moropo sees lekomo as more than music; it is a movement of recognition. “Lekomo is a very big genre, but it needs more recognition. What we are doing is not just music; it’s storytelling. It’s about capturing the spirit of our people, our struggles, our joys, and our dreams. When you listen to a lekomo track, you hear the heartbeat of Limpopo,” he said.

His entry into the genre feels destined. “God gave me this diverse gift so that I do not suffer,” he reflected. “I can’t complain about being broke when I’ve been given the talent to tell stories in many different ways through acting, dance, voice and music.”

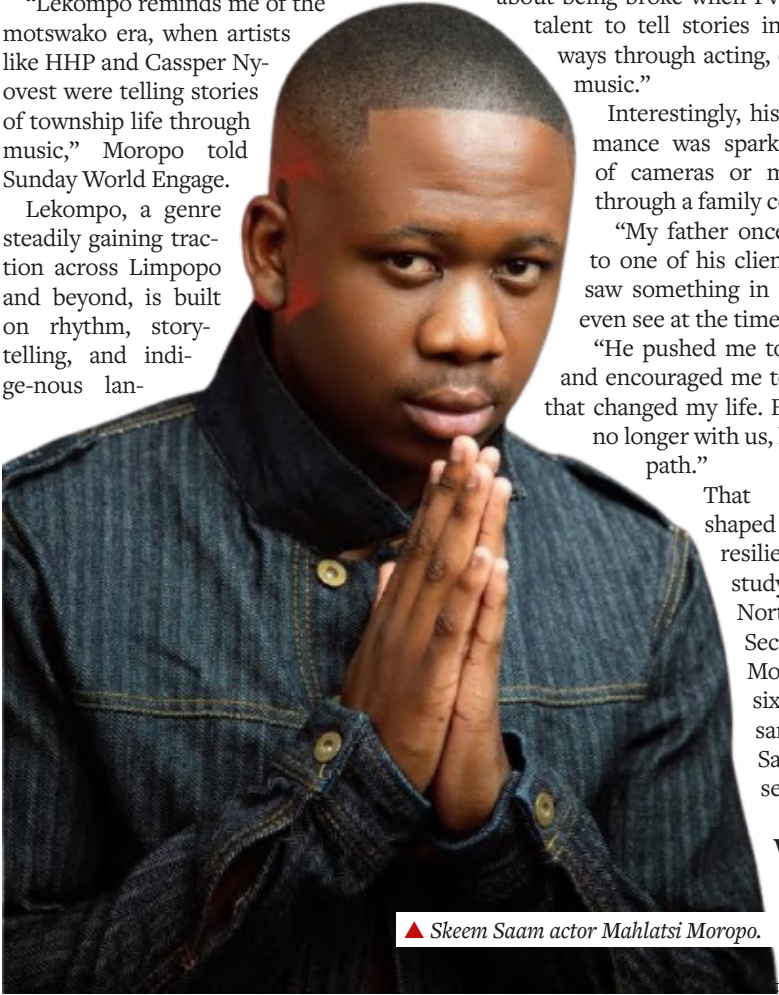
Interestingly, his love for performance was sparked not in front of cameras or microphones but through a family connection.

“My father once introduced me to one of his clients, and the man saw something in me that I didn’t even see at the time.

“He pushed me towards the stage and encouraged me to try drama, and that changed my life. Even though he’s no longer with us, he set me on this path.”

That encouragement shaped a journey of resilience. While studying drama at Northern Academy Secondary School, Moropo auditioned six times for the same role in *Skeem Saam* before finally securing it.

(Sunday World)



▲ Skeem Saam actor Mahlatsi Moropo.

MacG on Shaka iLembe cameo

PODCASTER MacGyver ‘MacG’ Mukwevho has ticked off an item on his bucket list after his cameo in the last episode of *Shaka iLembe*.

“I was really excited, as I’m big fan of the show. It was one of those things on my bucket list,” MacG told The Citizen.

MacG made a brief appearance on the 11th episode of *Shaka iLembe*, as one of the men in the Qwabe tribe, where he was supporting King Phakathwayo (portrayed by Akhona Ndlovu) just before a deadly stick fight with Shaka Zulu.

In the penultimate episode of the series, Phakathwayo foolishly challenges Shaka to a stick fight; if he wins, Shaka will submit to him, but if he loses, the Qwabe army will march with the Zulus.

Shaka delivers a fatal blow, then helps install Nqetho as ruler, cementing loyalty and expanding his power and domain.

Read more

‘It’s about the court case with Minnie’ says Sol Phenduka on the reason behind his suspension

“It was an honour to be part of such a rich story from our history, even though I’m not Zulu,” said MacG, whose ethnicity is Ven a.

The podcaster, who also makes music, said the appearance on *Shaka iLembe* was a once-off. “This was a once-off stint that I couldn’t refuse,” he said.

In 2023, MacG invited *Shaka iLembe* creator and director Angus Gibson on his

platform, Podcast and Chill with MacG.

“The reason we invited you [is] cause we wanna be in *Shaka*,” said MacG at the time.

Fans of his podcast, who are affectionately known as chillers, were taken aback by his appearance, with many joking that this cameo will be dissected for hours on his podcast.

“I feel blessed and grateful; this is one of those moments that I got to experience and share with the chillers.”

MacG’s appearance on the popular TV show comes after celebrated music producer Lebo M publicly showed support to media personality Minenhle ‘Minnie’ Dlamini in her lawsuit against MacG and co-host Sol Phenduka.

Dlamini accused the Podcast and Chill hosts of hate speech and harassment, and in submitted court papers, Dlamini seeks legal accountability.

She is demanding R1 million for herself and an additional R1.5 million to be donated to a women’s organisation.

When asked about Lebo’s M’s support of Minnie and the lawsuit, the podcaster said he had “no comment”.

After speculation about the reason for his suspension by Kaya FM last Wednesday, broadcaster Sol Phenduka broke his silence on Thursday, saying that the reason behind the suspension is Dlamini’s lawsuit.

(The Citizen)



▲ Podcaster MacGyver ‘MacG’ Mukwevho.

LATE nights and a few drinks might be disrupting your sleep more than you think.

A large international study led by researchers at Flinders University has found that symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) — a common sleep disorder that may slow or stop breathing — may tend to worsen on weekends.

Researchers coined the term “social apnea” to describe the weekend increase in symptoms, which appear driven by lifestyle habits such as staying up late, sleeping in, and drinking alcohol. Adherence to OSA therapies like CPAP machines may also be less consistent on weekends.

The team analyzed data from over 70,000 people worldwide and found participants were 18% more likely to have moderate to severe OSA on weekends (Saturdays) than mid-week (Wednesdays).

Sleeping an extra 45 minutes or more on weekends increased the risk of worse sleep apnea by 47%.

“Biologically, these habits can relax the muscles in the throat, push sleep into early-morning REM stages (when OSA is often more severe), and throw the body clock out of sync,” Heather Darwall-Smith, a psychotherapist specializing in sleep, who wasn’t involved in the study, told Healthline.

Why ‘social apnea’ may worsen on weekends

Sleep specialist Lindsey Hanna said symptoms of “social apnea” could develop even in those who don’t have obstructive sleep apnea.

“We often call it ‘social jetlag,’” she told Healthline. “Your body clock thrives on predictability, and when you shift your schedule by several hours on the weekend, your sleep becomes lighter and more fragmented.”

“Even without OSA, people often notice Monday morning grogginess, cravings for sugary foods, and reduced focus. You don’t need a diagnosis of OSA to feel the impact because your circadian system always notices when routines are off,” Hanna continued.

Certain individuals may be more susceptible to sleep-related disruptions than others.

“The research found the effect was stronger in men and in adults under 60, but anyone who lives with big swings between weekdays and weekends is likely to notice it,” Hanna said.

“Shift workers, parents of young children, or anyone juggling late nights with early starts are especially vulnerable to weekend-related sleep disruption,” she added.

Long-term effects of poor sleep

Long-term poor sleep — even if it’s only on weekends — can take a toll on physical and mental health.

“Even without diagnosed OSA (bear in mind it is massively under-diagnosed), irregular weekend routines can fragment sleep, reduce deep and REM stages, and leave you feeling less rested,” Darwall-Smith said.

“It can also disrupt hormone balance, including leptin and ghrelin. This can lead to increased appetite, food cravings, and gradual weight gain, which in turn can raise OSA risk.”

Late nights and increased alcohol consumption can also impact body weight and appetite hormones.

“Eating large, late meals can disrupt

Weekend habits and sleep apnea

- A large study found that moderate to severe obstructive sleep apnea symptoms are more likely to occur on weekends, a trend researchers are calling “social apnea.”
- Late nights, sleeping in, alcohol, and skipping CPAP therapy could be contributing factors.
- Even without the sleep disorder, irregular weekend routines can cause “social jetlag,” experts say.
- Keeping a consistent wake-up time, limiting weekend sleep-ins, and alternating alcohol with water can help promote quality sleep.



digestion overnight and, over time, contribute to weight gain,” Darwall-Smith explained.

“This is important because extra weight around the neck and upper airway increases OSA risk, while disrupted sleep alters hormones like leptin (which signals fullness) and ghrelin (which triggers hunger), making it harder to maintain a healthy weight.”

Darwall-Smith said these factors can affect mood, focus, and emotional regulation, which may influence a person’s behaviors in relationships, at work, and in daily life. “Beyond the medical side, disrupted sleep also affects patience, communication, and emotional availability,” she explained.

Lifestyle changes to improve sleep quality

If you’re concerned you’re not getting

enough quality sleep on the weekends, experts say it’s important to maintain a consistent wake-up time, even on weekends.

“Even if you go to bed later, try not to sleep in too much the next day as that can trigger social jetlag,” Darwall-Smith advised.

For those nights when you don’t get enough quality shut-eye, Hanna recommended short daytime naps, of 30 minutes or less, “rather than prolonged morning sleep to repay sleep debt.”

If you’re consuming alcohol, Darwall-Smith noted it’s a good idea to alternate drinks with a nonalcoholic beverage.

“For every alcoholic drink, have a glass of water; this reduces dehydration and may lessen airway relaxation,” she explained.

What and when you eat can impact your sleep quality as well.

“Aim to finish large or heavy meals at

least two to three hours before bed to aid digestion and reduce night-time reflux, which can worsen breathing disruptions,” Darwall-Smith advised.

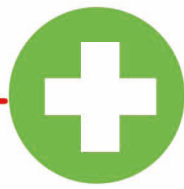
You should also carve out time for restful activities on the weekend. For example, Darwall-Smith recommended adding recovery time to your weekend schedule.

“Plan lighter activities the morning after a big night, so you’re not overloading yourself when you’re already short on restorative sleep,” she said.

“What I like about the ‘social apnea’ concept is that it reminds us that sleep health isn’t just a medical issue, it’s relational,” Darwall-Smith said.

“It affects how we feel, think, and interact, and, fortunately, small changes in weekend habits can protect not only your health but also the quality of your time with loved ones.”

Healthline



BLACKHEADS are one of the most common and stubborn skin conditions.

Some ways of removing them are safer than others.

Sometimes, cleansing and exfoliating may be enough to loosen a plug and draw it out. But if the plug hardens or is too deep to access, you might not be able to remove the blackhead on your own.

Below, you'll find tips on how to use over-the-counter (OTC) products for blackheads, information on what to expect from professional removal, and more.

For home removal, start by cleansing

Your first step should always be to cleanse your face. This is best done daily, morning and night. If you work out or get sweaty during the day, you may want to wash your face again afterward.

That said, try to avoid overcleansing. This can dry out your skin and cause more dead skin cells and sebum to accumulate in your pores. If you prefer to wash your face more frequently, try limiting cleansing to morning and evening washes and rinsing with plain water throughout the day to avoid drying out your face.

The type of cleanser you use can also make a difference in blackhead removal and prevention.

Many people prefer gel-based cleansers, which:

- ▶ aren't oily like some cream-based cleansers
- ▶ are typically safe for both oily and sensitive skin

A daily cleanser with gentle exfoliants can also help remove dead skin cells.

Use a physical exfoliant

Exfoliation helps remove dead skin cells, sebum, and other debris from the surface of your skin.

When it comes to physical exfoliants, you have plenty of options, but avoid choosing anything too harsh that will irritate your pores. Ground-up nuts and other harsh beads may irritate active breakouts or sensitive skin. Consider something simple, like a do-it-yourself (DIY) natural option or an OTC scrub with gentle ingredients, like oatmeal. You'll generally want to follow the instructions on the product you choose, but this is a good starting place for most exfoliants:

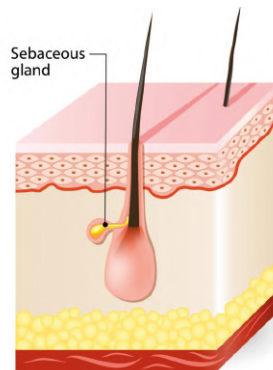
- ▶ Apply a thin layer of exfoliant.
- ▶ Spread it evenly over your skin.
- ▶ Massage — don't scrub — it into your skin.
- ▶ You might need to leave it on your face for several minutes, but check the product package to be sure.
- ▶ Once the process is done, rinse off the product completely.

Open your pores with a steam session

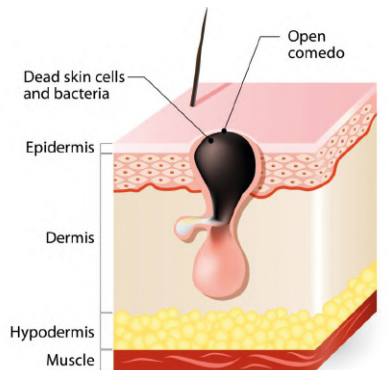
Steam can help loosen the gunk that's clogging your pores, setting you up for a more effective extraction process. You don't need a spa steamer to get these benefits, though.

To open your pores with steam at home, try this technique:

- ▶ First, boil up to 6 cups of water in a pot or kettle.
- ▶ Let the water cool for 1 to 2 minutes.
- ▶ Carefully pour the water into a bowl.
- ▶ Sit in front of the bowl, resting your face about 6 inches above the water.



Healthy



Blackhead

- ▶ Drape a towel over your head and the water source to hold the steam in.
- ▶ Raise or lower your head for more or less heat. Lift a corner of the towel to cool off, if needed.
- ▶ Stay for up to 10 minutes at a time.

Apply a clay or charcoal mask

Exfoliation and steam help prepare your pores for extraction, but applying a mask first can help make it even more successful.

Use a clay or charcoal-based mask. These ingredients help deeply cleanse the pores, and you'll want to get as much dirt and oil out of your pores as you can before using an extractor tool.

How to do it:

- ▶ Apply a thin, even layer of the clay or charcoal mask to your face.
- ▶ Leave the mask on for about 15 minutes.
- ▶ Rinse your face thoroughly with warm water.

Use an extractor tool

After loosening your pores and applying a mask, you can try extracting deep blackheads yourself.

Here's how:

- ▶ Sterilize your extractor tool with rubbing alcohol.
- ▶ Press the loop face down on the edge of the blackhead you're trying to remove. Avoid pressing directly down in the middle of the blackhead, as this can irritate your pore.
- ▶ Once you've got the head of the tool in place, make a gentle sweeping motion to the other side of your pore.
- ▶ If you don't get the plug out the first time, repeat up to two more times — any more than this can irritate or damage the surrounding skin.
- ▶ Always sterilize your tool between uses to prevent the transfer of dirt and bacteria between pores.
- ▶ Apply a cooling gel mask or soothing serum

▶ After extracting debris from your pores, it's important to soothe your skin to prevent inflammation. You can do this with a cooling gel mask or face serum.

▶ When choosing a mask or serum, opt for anti-inflammatory ingredients such as green tea, vitamin E, and almond oil. Apply a small amount in an even layer.

▶ If you're using a gel mask, rinse after use and follow up with the rest of your skin care routine.

Whatever you do, don't squeeze or pinch

Squeezing out a blackhead might feel tempting, especially if you can't safely extract it the first time around. But the advice you've probably heard before is true: You really shouldn't pinch, poke, or squeeze out a blackhead or pimple, since this can potentially lead to:

- ▶ irritation
- ▶ pores that appear larger
- ▶ bruising and scarring. **WebMD**

News in pictures from around the world



▲ Smoke rises from the hills beyond a vineyard in Calistoga as the Pickett Fire burns, in Napa County, California.



▲ A man reacts as he holds the equipment used by Palestinian cameraman Hussam al-Masri, who was a contractor for Reuters.



▲ A protester shouts “Facists” and gestures after the passing of HB 4, a bill that would redraw the state’s 38 Congressional Districts, and the prevention of a filibuster from Democrat Texas State Senator Carol Alvarado



▲ Kilmar Abrego Garcia, the migrant whose wrongful deportation to El Salvador made him a symbol of Trump’s aggressive immigration policies, holds his wife Jennifer Vasquez Sura’s hand.



▲ A girl having dinner with her family in a restaurant looks out at members of the Ohio National Guard, wearing their sidearms, in the Logan Circle neighborhood of Washington, D.C.

Sabalenka, Djokovic into US Open round two as fuming Medvedev exits

ARYNA Sabalenka launched the defence of her US Open crown with victory Sunday while Novak Djokovic made a successful start to his latest bid for a record 25th Grand Slam singles title – but a raging Daniil Medvedev exited.

World No 1 Sabalenka, bidding to become the first woman to claim back-to-back US Open titles since Serena Williams completed a hat-trick of wins in 2014, was made to work hard en route to a 7-5, 6-1 victory over Switzerland’s Rebeka Masarova.

Masarova, ranked 108th in the world, pushed Sabalenka out of her comfort zone with a gutsy performance on the Billie Jean King National Tennis Centre’s main Arthur Ashe Stadium showcourt.

“Happy to get this win and happy to be in the second round. I feel like I didn’t start my best in the first games, but then I found my rhythm,” said Sabalenka, who will face unseeded Russian Polina Kudermetova.

While Sabalenka advanced safely, Danish 14th seed Clara Tauson tumbled out to Alexandra Eala.

Eala, 20, became the first player from the Philippines to win a Grand Slam singles match with a thrilling 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (13/11) win, battling back from a 5-1 deficit in the final set.

“I’m super over the moon with what I was able to do today, especially coming back in the third,” Eala said.

“It’s a very special win for me.”

Another player from Southeast Asia – Indonesia’s Janice Tjen – also bagged an upset, ousting Russian 24th seed Veronika Kudermetova 6-4, 4-6, 6-4.



▲ Tennis player Aryna Sabalenka.

“I feel proud to be able to do this for my country,” said Tjen, the first Indonesian since Angelique Widjaja in 2004 to reach the main draw of a Grand Slam singles event.

Tjen, ranked 149th in the world, will face Britain’s Emma Raducanu in the second round.

DJOKOVIC OFF THE MARK

Raducanu, who made history at Flushing Meadows in 2021 by becoming the first qualifier to lift a Grand Slam title, clinched her first US Open match win since that memorable triumph with a 6-1, 6-2 drubbing of Japan’s Ena Shibahara.

“I wanted to win a match here really bad,” said Raducanu.

“It’s been four years and it’s a very special tournament for me.”

With men’s defending champion Jannik Sinner and rival Carlos Alcaraz not opening their campaigns until Monday and Tuesday, all eyes were on the veteran Serbian star Djokovic in Sunday’s night session on Ashe.

The 38-year-old showed flashes of brilliance in a 6-1, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 win against his unseeded 19-year-old American opponent Learner Tien.

Djokovic raced through the first set but was then forced to save a set point in the second after Tien grew in confidence.

A lengthy medical timeout to treat what looked like a blister on his right foot helped

revive Djokovic and he pulled away to wrap up victory in 2hr 25min.

“I still have the flair, I still have the drive and you guys give me the energy,” Djokovic told the crowd. “Hopefully I can keep it going.”

The final game of the opening day saw a chaotic victory for France’s Benjamin Bonzi over Russian 13th seed Medvedev, the 2021 US Open champion.

Amid extraordinary scenes at the end of the third set, play was held up for more than six minutes as Bonzi waited to serve on match point.

It followed a tirade by Medvedev against chair umpire Greg Allensworth after the official re-awarded Bonzi a first serve when a photographer mistakenly walked onto the court.

With Medvedev egging the crowd on to voice their displeasure, Bonzi lost the set and Medvedev won the fourth to square the match.

Bonzi though recovered in the fifth to close out a 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 0-6, 6-4 win in 3hr 45min.

“It was crazy,” Bonzi said. “The energy was wild. Thanks to all those who were booing, that gave me energy in the fifth.”

Fourth seed Taylor Fritz and sixth seed Ben Shelton eased into the second round.

Fritz, last year’s beaten finalist, won 7-5, 6-2, 6-3 against unseeded compatriot Emilio Nava.

Shelton had a similarly comfortable 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 defeat of Peruvian qualifier Ignacio Buse.

Shelton and Fritz are spearheading US hopes of a first Grand Slam men’s singles title since Andy Roddick’s victory at the 2003

Rahm’s Legion XIII edge DeChambeau’s Crushers for LIV team title

JON Rahm and Legion XIII edged Bryson DeChambeau and Crushers GC in a playoff Sunday in the LIV Golf League team final in Michigan.

Spain’s Rahm and England’s Tyrrell Hatton both birdied the last two holes of regulation and produced another brace of birdies on the second hole of the sudden death playoff against DeChambeau and Paul Casey.

DeChambeau, a two-time major champion, had birdied three straight holes late in regulation as he produced an eight-under par 62 that was the best score of the day at The Cardinal at Saint John’s Resort.

But Hatton and Rahm also both birdied 17 and 18 as Legion and Crushers finished regulation tied at 20-under, with Stinger GC – the all-South Africa team captained by Louis Oosthuizen – finishing well back on 12-under.

Two-time major-winner Rahm and fellow captain DeChambeau each chose a partner for the extra holes, with the two-man total score winning.

DeChambeau and Hatton both birdied the first playoff hole as Rahm and Casey parred.

At the second all four players found the fairway again, and Hatton and Rahm both stuck their second shots close – while Casey found him-



▲ Golfer Jon Rahm.

self some 20 feet from the pin and DeChambeau ended up in the rough.

When the Legion players converted their birdie attempts the title was theirs.

In regulation, Caleb Surratt led Legion XIII with a 64, Rahm and Tom McKibbin both signed for 65s and Hatton carded a 66.

For Crushers, DeChambeau posted a 62, Casey and Anirban Lahiri shot 65 and Charles Howell III

signed for a 68.

Legion, Crushers and Stinger had each emerged with 2-1 victories in Saturday’s match play semifinals.

Rahm helped Legion XIII triumph in the team event a week after he captured his second straight individual season crown in Indianapolis.

The Spaniard carded an 11-under par 60 before losing a playoff to Colombia’s Sebastian Munoz, but Rahm’s second playoff defeat in as

Amorim warns Mainoo he must fight for his Man United place

KOBBIE Mainoo is facing an uncertain future at Manchester United after manager Ruben Amorim revealed the midfielder is competing with captain Bruno Fernandes for a place in the team.

England international Mainoo has yet to feature for United this season, missing both the opening-day defeat by Arsenal and Sunday’s 1-1 draw at Fulham.

The 20-year-old was overlooked by Amorim at Craven Cottage as United chased victory after Fulham’s Emile Smith Rowe cancelled out the Rodrigo Muniz own-goal which had giv-

en the visitors the lead.

When Amorim replaced Casemiro with new striker Benjamin Sesko, he moved Mason Mount, who started up front, back into midfield.

Portuguese boss Amorim then replaced Mount with Manuel Ugarte before turning to defenders Harry Maguire and Ayden Heaven in search of a winner.

Fernandes blazed a first-half penalty over the crossbar but his place as a first-team regular remains assured, with a League Cup appearance against Grimsby on Wednesday seemingly the best Mainoo can hope for in the short term.



▲ Kobbie Mainoo.

Passionate Ouaddou hoping to win fans over against Orbit

ORLANDO Pirates head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou sympathises with the club's fans as he targets more improvement against Orbit College at the Orlando Stadium on Tuesday, August 26. Ouaddou has come in for criticism from a section of the Buccaneers' passionate fanbase after losing his opening two league games at the helm since replacing Jose Riveiro.

Pirates suffered a narrow 1-0 defeat to Sekhukhune United on the opening weekend and were also beaten 2-1 by Marumo Gallants three days later on August 12.

Ouaddou's side finally got their Betway Premiership campaign up and running with a 1-0 victory over Stellenbosch on August 20, while they reached the MTN8 final for a fourth consecutive year by eliminating Mamelodi Sundowns on penalties last weekend.

However, the Sea Robbers had to come from behind in both legs of the semifinals to earn 1-1 draws with the Brazilians, as new signing Kamogelo Sebelele made an immediate impact after scoring the two equalisers. Debutants Orbit College are just behind the Soweto giants on goal difference in 12th place after also picking up three points from their opening three matches.

Pogiso Makhoye's side, who earned a historic promotion via the playoffs, went down 1-0 to AmaZulu on August 9 before recording their maiden win against Siwelele (1-0) three days later.

Rooney forecasts 'massive future' for Arsenal teen sensation Dowman

Dowman came on as a substitute aged just 15 years and 234 days during the Gunners' 5-0 win over Leeds at the Emirates on Saturday.

He also did more than take the field during his 26 minutes on the pitch, with the attacking midfielder earning a late penalty, which saw Viktor Gyokeres score from the spot.

Former England captain Rooney made his Everton debut aged 16 in 2002 and was five days short of his 17th birthday when he briefly became the Premier League's youngest goalscorer by registering a stunning late winner against Arsenal.

Speaking on his BBC podcast, the Wayne Rooney Show, the Manchester United great said of Dowman: "To play at that age in the Premier League is crazy. I know I played when I was young, but I think he's like 150 days younger than I was, or more.

"For Max and his family and friends, I'm sure they're all living in a dream and a fairytale and it probably hasn't hit home yet. But you can see his future is so bright, he is going to have a massive future.

Max Dowman appreciation tweet "Everyone you speak to in football, the same name keeps coming back: Max Dowman."

Dowman's teammate Ethan



▲ Orlando Pirates head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou.

The North West outfit then crashed to a heavy 3-0 loss against Babina Noko, who occupy top spot in the league on goal difference ahead of Kaizer Chiefs.

What was said: Orlando Pirates head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou

"I said it before that when you go to the cinema and you don't like the movie or you go to the theatre and you don't like the play, you can criticise it because you paid for the ticket.

"When the fans are not happy because you are not winning, I understand them. What can I do? The only thing is to work hard in silence and to be passionate. I am doing the job with passion.

"I'm very happy for our fans who

come in and pack the stadium. But when I leave this room my mind will be on the game against Orbit.

"We don't have time to celebrate... as a coach you have to quickly think about the next game. I'm doing my job and I'm going to prepare the strategy for the next game."

Players to watch: Orlando Pirates - Kamogelo Sebelele has hit the ground running at Pirates after making the move from TS Galaxy in July. The 23-year-old winger helped the defending champions reach the MTN8 final for the fourth time in five years with back-to-back goals against Sundowns and he opened his account in the league on his first start with a cracker from range against the Maroons.

(Supersport)



▲ Max Dowman.

Nwaneri remains the youngest player in Premier League history after featuring in Arsenal's 3-0 victory at Brentford in September 2022 aged 15 years and 181 days.

The now 39-year-old Rooney, speaking about the pressures that come with playing top-flight football at such an early age, added: "It's surreal. It's so strange that one minute you're in the youth team and the next you're in the first-team dress-

ing room with some of your heroes.

"It's something you really need to get used to quickly because it can be overwhelming.

"Max Dowman looks like a very level-headed lad from everything I've seen and you hope he manages to deal with it and understands what's coming his way very soon."

(Supersport)

Blaney wins regular-season finale in Daytona; Reddick, Bowman playoff-bound

Ryan Blaney put Ford back into Victory Lane for the first time in nearly three months Saturday night and gained momentum heading into next weekend's playoff opener.

The 2023 NASCAR Cup Series champion was first to the checkered flag in a frantic, four-wide finish in Saturday night's regular-season finale, taking the Coke Zero Sugar 400 at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Running 13th with two laps left, the Team Penske driver stormed past Cole Custer on the final lap and nipped Daniel Suarez by 0.031 seconds for his second win this season and first for Ford since Blaney won at Nashville on June 1.

Justin Haley, Custer and Erik Jones completed the top five.

"What a wild last couple of laps," said Blaney, who led 27 laps and won for the second time at Daytona (August 2021). "Cole and I waited and waited. He made a good move to get to the top, and we were able to get good shoes. ... I was able to get clear on the top and just hold out for the win."

A Ford won for the third time in the past five Daytona races.

Points contenders Tyler Reddick and Alex Bowman, 15th and 16th, respectively, got caught up in wrecks not of their making within the first 30 laps. The second one, a giant pile-up that damaged Bowman's ride, solidified Reddick in the 16-car championship field made up of 14 winners, Reddick and Bowman, who made it in despite a destroyed Chevrolet.

A win by any of the four drivers behind Blaney would have eliminated Bowman.

Chris Buescher was 17th in points and in a must-win situation, but he lost ground when leader Joey Logano spun in front of him with 12 to go.

"When he got tagged or turned or whatever, we checked up and lost our momentum and all kind of spots," said Buescher, one of three RFK Racing drivers to miss the postseason.

The playoffs begin next Sunday night with the Round of 16 at Darlington in the Labor Day classic Southern 500.

The 160-lap race's first major incident occurred when Todd Gilliland's car moved left off Turn 4 while running beside Reddick's No 45 Toyota, which hit the inside wall beside the apron and had its nose buckle significantly.

But "The Big One" happened on Lap 27 when contact to third-place Bubba Wallace turned the No 23 Toyota down the track, pinched Logano's Ford and sparked a hefty mess on the 2.5-mile track's frontstretch.

In the 12-car carnage, Bowman's No 48 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet crashed against the outside wall under the flagstand, crumpling the front area of the car, sending it to the garage and creating a brief red-flag condition on Lap 29.

Mired in a slump since mid-May, Kyle Larson captured Stage 1 and earned the maximum 10 points. Florida native Ross Chastain finished second followed by Blaney, who started from the pole.

As Stage 2 neared its close, Carson Hocevar's No 77 Chevrolet expired, setting up an eight-lap shootout headed by leader William Byron, who was assessed a penalty to start the race for unapproved adjustments after inspection. Chastain won the sprint over Christopher Bell and Logano.

Logano spun on his own off Turn 4 in tight racing to fly the eighth caution and set up the wild finish.

(Supersport)



▲ Ryan Blaney.



▲ Youngsters in action during the tournament.



▲ These youngsters were watched by their mother.



▲ Nompulelo Dladla a mother to one of the participants, Onalenna Thulo having a light moment.

SA, Moz academics partnership targeted – Ex-‘Birds’ ‘Wawa’

Stories By Chris Dlamini

SOCCKER development in Eswatini is about to explode into a bigger project.

This is if former Mbabane Swallows and national team star defender, Wandile ‘Wawa’ Mazibuko’s dream sees the light of day. Mazibuko is already running a fast-growing soccer academy called Wingo Sports Academy and does its business in

Ezulwini, at the Mbabane Highlanders training base renowned as Ethefini. “The bigger dream and target are to see our products go professional in South Africa and beyond Africa as there are scholarships that

come with some academies outside the country. I’ve already been to SuperSport in South Africa (SA) before the team was sold, then TS Galaxy early this year where we came up with the vision to work on making academy soccer a big project and business,” said Mazibuko during his first-ever academy tournament in Ezulwini on Saturday. He said they would soon announce a partnership that will involve Eswatini, SA, and Mozambique. “For now, we’re happy and proud to have successfully hosted this tournament,” said Mazibuko. He said it would not be long before they achieved the international partnership as it was already a work in progress.



▲ Retired Zimbabwe legend Stanford Ncube was also part of the games.



▲ Green Mamba legend Siculo ‘Wire’ Mazibuko also graced the games.

Companies invited to join hands

WITHOUT sponsors, some targets can be hard to achieve. This is the sad reality of not just football but all sports projects in the kingdom. It is on that basis that Wingo Sports Academy managing director, Wandile ‘Wawa’ Mazibuko has appealed to the local business community to come forward and partner with them in the Academy soccer project. “Right now, all of this success you see is through the grace of God. It’s all from the pocket partnered with the help we get from the children’s parents. I really must thank the parents for everything they do to make this work for us and the Academy students.

My family, wife, and former elite players have also been a big strength to the success of the academy,” said Mazibuko. He appealed to local companies to consider venturing into academy soccer partnerships because their brands will be in the right place. “Soccer is a big sport and the development of young players is great business as we aim to make future stars for overseas football, not just Eswatini soccer,” he said. Mazibuko said any company willing to partner with them was welcome as they definitely needed sponsors. His contact number is 7668 3271.

Former stars, parents turn up, back children

PARENTS and former elite soccer stars turned up in impressive numbers for the Wingo Sports Academy Soccer Tournament. It was the first tournament since the academy was formed last year, and it was successful. This publication spoke to some of the parents who included renowned ex-Manzini Wanderers forward, Berger ‘Hotline’ Nxumalo. Interestingly, some former elite stars oversaw some of the invited local academies just like Wingo Sports Academy owner, Wandile ‘Wawa’ Mazibuko. Their comments are shared here. **Berger ‘Hotline’ Nxumalo (Ex-Manzini Wanderers):** “I came to support my son who’s in the under-10s of Wingo Sports Academy. He’s going to be like his father and will play for Manzini Wanderers at some point, then probably go beyond Eswatini. Otherwise, what Wawa and the other former elite players are doing is a great task and good for our football. This just needs sponsorship to thrive and see dreams come to reality for the youngsters.” **Nompulelo Dladla:** “I’m 100 per cent behind my son. I give him everything he needs for this as he is so passionate about soccer. I’m happy to see him shine and get celebrated by his team for his goalkeeping heroics. I just hope he succeeds, and companies also join to sponsor the academy football especially if it is this organised

and something special for the children.” **Stanford Ncube (Ex-Mbabane Highlanders and Mbabane Swallows):** “This is my life now, academy football and thanks to Wawa for the big and important project. This only needs sponsorship for it to grow and achieve even bigger things with the players we educate here. Soon we’ll have an academy league but we require local business brands to partner with us to see that dream come true. I’m under Wingo Sports Academy but I’m happy to see other current and ex-elite players involved in academy football as we invited some from the kingdom and we expect to play similar tournaments under each of these academies we have here.” **Siculo ‘Wire’ Mazibuko (Ex-Mbabane City and Green Mamba):** “Development is always crucial. This project will enhance the young boys with basics and life skills while soon strengthening our elite teams. We are here to support and hoping to see this grow.” **Tournament Winners:** **Under-15s** 1. Shooting Stars 2. Young Eagles 3. Phantom Six **Under-13s** 1. Young Eagles 2. Phantom Six 3. Montessori Life **Under-10s** 1. Wingo Sports Academy



‘One Game, One Dream, United in Motion’

By Chris Dlamini

THE COSSASA Games Eswatini 2025 were officially opened on Monday.

This was at Somhlolo National Stadium in Lobamba where neighbouring countries compete in the annual games attended.

COSSASA is an acronym for Confederation of School Sport Associations of Southern Africa, and its president Arthur Maposa, alongside Eswatini’s Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Minister Bongani Nzima, as well as Education and Training Minister Owen Nxumalo were the main guests.

“It is my great pleasure to officially declare the COSSASA track and field championships and ball games open here at the magnificent Somhlolo National in Eswatini. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Government of Eswatini, particularly the Ministries of Education and Training, and Sports, for the warm welcome and support extended to us. Your presence, Honourable Ministers, signifies the importance attached to sports development in our region.

“The theme of these games, ‘One Game, One Dream...United in Motion’, resonates deeply with our organisation’s vision of unity and excellence in sports,” said Maposa.

The COSSASA leader said he was honoured to welcome all competing countries, making note of the increased numbers each brought.

“We are thrilled to see increased numbers from our member countries, and this is a testament to the growing interest and commitment to sports development in our region,” he said.

Maposa appealed for all to embody the theme and strive for greatness, not just individually, but collectively.

He thanked the Eswatini Government and Local Organising Committee for the work and support they put in to ensure the successful hosting of the games attended by South Africa (SA), Lesotho and Zimbabwe.



▲ Team Eswatini during the Cosassa Games opening ceremony held on Monday at Somhlolo National Stadium.

... Compete with passion, respect — Minister

Nzima The country’s Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Minister Bongani Nzima has called for fair competition in the COSSASA Games Eswatini 2025.

In his brief remarks during the opening ceremony of the Games hosted by Eswatini this year, Nzima welcomed all participating countries not just as visitors but brothers and sisters who have returned home.

“Compete with passion, respect and discipline. Play fairly, and carry yourselves as true ambassadors of your Nations and African Youth.

“Whether you walk away with a medal or not, know that participating itself is a triumph and a stepping stone to greatness,” Nzima appealed to the athletes.

He also called for EmaSwati to be gracious hosts and further attend the games in the different sporting arenas used in the Lobamba, Matsapha and Manzini corridor. Besides Somhlolo National Stadium, OlympAfrica at Lobamba, Manzini Club and University of Eswatini (UNESWA), Kwaluseni Campus.



▲ Eswatini and Zimbabwe boys under 18 teams.

Sive wins August Previc Golf Mug

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

VETERAN Golfer Sive Dlamini delivered a commanding performance to win the August Previc Investment Golf competition.

Dlamini scored 39 points to win the August edition of the Lubombo on Saturday at Mananga Country Club.

The champion was followed by Sabelo Masuku with 38 points while Mbuso Mdluli rounded off the podium with 37 points on a countback.

It was so close yet so far for the duo of Nathie Tsabedze and Nathi Ginindza, who finished out of the top four bracket Dlamini

has joined the likes of Fortune Ngwenya, Zenzi Hadzebe, Nathan Koen, and Lewis Thobela in the list of previous winners of the Lubombo region tournament.

Previc Investment director Mangaliso Masilela congratulated the champion on the achievement.

“Kudos to the champion for the success. We thank golfers for attending the competition in numbers. We will continue supporting the tournament as a way of giving back to the community,” he said.

Full results:

1. Sive Dlamini – 39 points
2. Sabelo Masuku – 38points
3. Mbuso Mdluli – 37o/b points
4. Nathi Tsabedze - 37o/b points
5. Nathi Ginindza 37o/points



▲ Previc Investment director Mangaliso Masilela presenting August edition winner Sive Dlamini with his prize.

PREDICTIONS AHEAD OF 8BET TRADE FAIR CUP

Early exit for ‘Birds’, ‘Westlians’

Stories By Chris Dlamini

THE 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025/26 is the talk this week ahead of its kick-off on Saturday, August 30.

The action for the second edition, sponsored to the tune of E2.5 million will get underway with a triple-header grand opening at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini from 1.30pm, the last match set for 6.30pm. First to take to the play field will be Ubombo Sugar and Sisonkhe at 1:30pm, then Nsingizini Hotspurs and Tambankulu Celtics at 4pm, before Moneni Pirates, last season’s runners-up take on Rangers at 6:30pm.

Meanwhile, a former elite star in Young Buffaloes and Malanti Chiefs legend, Sabelo ‘Tso’ Hlatshwayo was on Monday given the task to predict the upcoming Trade Fair Cup fixtures. Hlatshwayo minced no words about his views from opening day to the last preliminary fixtures.

“Before I say much, I believe Moneni and Rangers will be the greatest advertising fixture for football because of the way the former plays and their experience in Cup



▲ Mbabane Swallows players.

tournaments will see them edge Rangers who have an experienced coach in Mthunzi.

“Otherwise, I’m worried about Swallows who have uncondusive problems right now and that will work against coach Caleb Ngwenya as much as he has the experience to win. Mentally, Swallows are not okay and I foresee Manzini Sea Birds stealing this match. Moving on to Wanderers and Green Mamba, the former have Nyanga as coach but I don’t see him going past an already well-oiled machine-like Green Mamba who also boasts experience and quality,” said

Hlatshwako.

He said the current ownership battle and other issues touching on the players at Swallows were a big factor that was set to work against them.

“It’s quite too much for the players’ mental readiness,” he added.

Hlatshwako was then tasked to predict the rest of the fixtures, especially his former teams Buffaloes and Malanti facing off. He said Buffaloes had all the quality and started their preseason preparations early, so they will have an upper hand over Malanti

who just made it back to the elite league as National First Division League champions last season. Among the opening day fixtures, he said Nsingizini was favoured against elite debutants Celtics as a side going to the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League and also played in the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup last year.

8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025/26 fixture:
Sunday, August 30

Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini:

U. Sugar vs. Sisonkhe 1:30pm

Ns. Hotspurs vs. T. Celtics 4pm

M. Pirates vs. Rangers 6:30pm

Sunday, August 31

Y. Buffaloes vs. M. Chiefs 1:30pm

M. Highlanders vs. Ez. United 4pm

G. Mamba vs. M. Wanderers 6:30pm

Monday, September 1

R. Leopard vs. Amawele 5pm

M. Swallows vs. M. Sea Birds 7:30pm

Tuesday, September 2 (Quarter-finals)

Winner M1 vs. Winner M2 - QF1 5pm

Winner M5 vs. Winner M6 - QF 2 7:30pm

(Quarter-finals) Winner M7 vs. Winner M8 -

QF 3 5:00pm Winner M3 vs. Winner M4 - QF

4 7:30pm

Buffaloes ‘kick’ Kick4Life 3-1

By Benjamin Nyirenda
UJ AW Muller Stadium

Young Buffaloes (1) 3,
Kick4Life.....(1) 1,

AFTER losing their first game against Gaborone United Ladies in the opening game at the CAF Women’s Champions League COSAFA Qualifiers 2025 Young Buffaloes on Monday bounced back and beat their Lesotho counterparts Kick4Life Ladies FC 3-1 in a game played at the UJ AW Muller in Johannesburg, South Africa. In this game Buffaloes started much better than they did against Gaborone United on Saturday as they tried to attack from the first whistle and in the third minute they had a chance, but Siphilisiwe Ndlovu shot wide from close range. Immediately after that Kick4Life also had their chance which Reitumetse Namane could not utilise in the 5th minute.

Kick4Life thought they had scored the opening goal, but it was disallowed for an offside which was later overturned by the VAR for a goal by Ntebohelong Mohoshela in the 10th minute. In the 18th minute Buffaloes won a free kick just outside the box but captain Celiwe Nkambule’s shot was blocked by the Kick4Life defensive wall. Buffaloes continued pressing and Simile Marks had another chance in the 25th minute which he shot wide. Once again Buffaloes goalkeeper Nokwanda Mamba was the difference with a one on one save from Namane. After this goal Buffaloes upped their game, and they found the equalizer in the 39th minute through Nonjabuliso Mokgale who beat the offside trap and the goalkeeper after receiving the ball from the midfield which was to be confirmed by the VAR once again.

To increase pressure on their enemies they made a change in the minute bringing in Tenanile Ngcampalala and Sisanda Ndzinisa



▲ Young Buffaloes ladies team.

for Samkelisiwe Malinga and Temalangeni Dlamini.

Seven minutes were added at the end of the first half. The first half ended with both teams looking for that elusive second goal.

At the start of the second half Kick4Life made their first change taking out Boiletlo Modise and bringing in Tsoaleli Thoalana. Dispite this change it was Buffaloes who started as a better team though just like in the first half they could not find that goal they needed. Buffaloes captain Celiwe Nkambule was the main player stringing passes which his teammates didn’t really use up front. In the 16th minute they won a corner kick which they couldn’t utilise but won another corner instead. In the 19th minute Siphilisiwe Ndlovu failed to score in a one-on-one situation with Kick4Life goalkeeper Boelo Lepheana which left the goalkeeper needing treatment after colliding with Ndlovu as she made the save. As the game progressed, Buffaloes keeper Nokwanda Mamba had to make several saves to keep the team in the game. In the 70th minute Buffaloes found the second goal via an own goal after a cross from Nkambule was turned in by Matseliso

Mosala to make it 2-1. Buffaloes could have made it 3-0 but they failed once again to score in a one-on-one situation. Buffaloes kept on pushing and in the 78th minute won another corner which they didn’t utilise but they scored from Sikhanyiso Magagula’s shot after a cross from Nkambule to make it 3-1. From here on Buffaloes pushed for a fourth goal as Lesotho made a change taking out Matsukulu Motlholohoa for Lerato Tsoinyane. In the 87th minute Nkambule could have made it 4-1 but after beating the goalkeeper her shot went just inches wide. However, after a long VAR review Buffaloes were awarded a free kick just outside the box and Kick4Life goalkeeper Boelo Lepheana was red carded for handling the ball outside the box. Kick4Life took out Reitumetse Namane for another goalkeeper Makeresemese Matjeketjane. After the Malawian referee Ernest Gumbo added 15 more minutes. After all the 15 minutes played the score remained 3-1 in favour of Young Buffaloes who are now waiting to see if they will qualify for the semifinals as the best 2nd losers in their group.

COSSASA Games:
Zim ambush
Eswatini U18s

Eswatini 0
Zimbabwe 5

NOT a good start.

These few words sum up a terrible start for COSSASA Games 2025 hosts, Eswatini. This is as far as soccer, in the under-18 category is concerned.

The Confederation of School Sport Associations of Southern Africa (COSSASA) Games 2025 began on Monday at Somhlolo National Stadium in Lobamba with track and field events as well as soccer between Eswatini and Zimbabwe.

Eswatini conceded as early as the third minute to a superior Zimbabwe side that went on to dominate every aspect of the match. By half-time, it was already 4-0.

Zimbabwe was already 3-0 up within the opening 35 minutes.

It could have been worse, but they also had missed chances with a couple of brilliant first-half saves.

Eswatini was forced to take ineffective long-range shots as they chased shadows in the match.

However, the second half was quite better, but it can also be said that Zimbabwe put their foot off the pedal, only scoring one more to win 5-0.

However, it is not all over for Eswatini. There are still two matches to play on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The game unfolded before a good crowd, as track and field events also took place at the country’s soccer Mecca.

However, even in athletics, things were not adding for Eswatini whose team may have been demotivated by their visiting rivals’ outfits and equipment, while most ran barefoot on the synthetic track.



**Ouaddou
hoping to win
fans over**

Page 20

**Buffaloes
'kick'
Kick4Life
3-1**

Page 23



Eswatini Tuesday 26
August, 2025
Daily News
Sport



PREDICTIONS AHEAD OF 8BET TRADE FAIR CUP:

Early exit for 'Birds', 'Weslians'

● **Former Young Buffaloes, Malanti Chiefs star Sabelo 'Tso' Hlatshwako predicts tough encounters for embattled Mbabane Swallows, Manzini Wanderers. *Page 23***