



Eswatini welcomes Kuwait delegation



By Kwanele Dhladhla

ESWATINI has rolled out the red carpet for a distinguished multi-sector delegation from the State of Kuwait, with Prime Minister Russell Dlamini and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Senator Pholile Shakantu extending a warm welcome on Monday. The Kuwaiti delegation is visiting Eswatini for three days to build stronger ties and look into business and tourism opportunities.

SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

‘Visit DPMO stall at
EITF so to reunite
with your long-lost
relatives’

Page 4



ICT minister tasks
new EPTC board
to turn parastatal
around in a year

Page 3



A Rubicon Media Group publication

NOW ACCEPTING BANK CARDS!
FAST, EASY, AND SECURE DEPOSITS!

Bet

Born to win!

REGISTER
NOW AT

www.ebet.co.sz

By Kwanele Dhladhla

ESWATINI has rolled out the red carpet for a distinguished multi-sector delegation from the State of Kuwait, with Prime Minister Russell Dlamini and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Senator Pholile Shakantu extending a warm welcome on Monday.

The Kuwaiti delegation is visiting Eswatini for three days to build stronger ties and look into business and tourism opportunities.

The visit was coordinated by Polinah Dlamini, the spouse of Eswatini's Ambassador to Kuwait.

His Excellency Nkululeko Dlamini leads the delegation.

At the welcome ceremony, Minister Shakantu shared an overview of Eswatini's culture and economy, highlighting the country's willingness to work with Kuwait on shared interests.

"Our engagement today is not only about cultural appreciation, but about deepening our bonds and creating new synergies that will benefit both nations," she said.

The delegation also met with the Prime Minister, who encouraged them to explore Eswatini's many economic opportunities.

"We are eager to showcase the beauty and potential of Eswatini to our Kuwaiti partners. Together, we can explore various sectors that hold promise for mutual benefit," said Dlamini.

Responding on behalf of the Kuwaiti delegation, Hasan Abdulkarim Al-Hasawi, Chair-

Eswatini welcomes Kuwait delegation

... PM, Minister Shakantu lay foundation to create new synergies to benefit both nations



▲ The distinguished multi-sector delegation from the State of Kuwait, pose for a picture with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Senator Pholile Shakantu on Monday.

man and CEO of Alhasawi Group, expressed gratitude for the Kingdom's hospitality.

"We are honoured to be here and truly appreciate the warm reception. Our visit seeks to fortify the ties between our nations and

explore various collaborative opportunities," he said.

Eswatini and Kuwait began diplomatic relations in 2008, and their partnership has grown through regular high-level meetings.

The current visit is expected to pave the way for stronger partnerships in trade, investment, tourism, and cultural exchange, signaling Eswatini's expanding ties with Gulf states.

By Siphesihle Dlamini

siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE National Emergency Response Council on HIV and AIDS (NERCHA) has entered a new chapter with the appointment of King's Office Director of Legal Affairs Ntsika Fakudze as its chairperson, marking the beginning of the 9th Council's three-year tenure.

This significant leadership transition was officially announced by Prime Minister Russell Dlamini, who emphasised the crucial role NERCHA plays in the country's fight against the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Fakudze takes over the reins from former Ambassador H.E. Njabuliso Gwebu, who had diligently led the council since 2022. The handover symbolises continuity and renewed vigour in the nation's multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS, a challenge that remains a top public health priority.

The newly constituted 9th NERCHA Council, which assumed office on 25 August 2025, comprises a diverse and experienced group of individuals. Alongside Chairperson Fakudze, the council includes Sifiso Dlamini, Pauline Dlamini, Hani Dlamini, Eric Seyama, Nhlanhla Nhlabatsi, Dr. Penuel Gina, Khanyisile Dube, Dr. Siphile Msane, Reverend Zachariah Mthethwa, Zanele Dlamini, Dr. Nondumiso Ncube, and Victor Nxumalo. This team is tasked with steering the national response to HIV and AIDS with strategic oversight and collaborative leadership.

In his address, Fakudze articulated the council's ambitious agenda. He underscored the weighty responsibility the board carries in the short term, emphasising the need to assist NERCHA in reaching its full strategic potential. "As I speak on behalf of the board, we want to underscore that the assignment and the mandate that lies before us in the

Ntsika Fakudze is NERCHA's 9th Council Chair



▲ New NERCHA Board Chairperson Ntsika Fakudze delivering his remarks.

short term is packed with many things to achieve and deliver on," he said. Fakudze highlighted the council's role in providing oversight and guidance, working hand in hand with the management team to ensure that the organisation meets its objectives effectively.

Prime Minister Russell Dlamini welcomed Fakudze's leadership, describing NERCHA as one of the country's most pivotal institutions. He acknowledged the enormous task of coordinating a multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS.

He expressed confidence in the new council's ability to support the National Executive Director and management team in fulfilling the organisation's mandate. The Prime Minister also took the opportunity to commend the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Gwebu, for her dedicated service and welcomed her return to the council as a member for a second term.

The formation of the 9th NERCHA Council comes at a critical time when the country continues to grapple with the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The council's strategic oversight will be vital in ensuring that prevention, treatment, and support programs are effectively implemented across all sectors. The diverse expertise of the council members, ranging from health professionals to community leaders, is expected to enhance the council's capacity to deliver impactful interventions.

New NERCHA Council appointed to tackle HIV and emerging health challenges in Eswatini

Prime Minister Russell Dlamini officially inaugurated the 9th NERCHA Council this morning, appointing them to serve a three-year term with Ntsika Fakudze as Chairperson.

The Prime Minister commended the Council for stepping into their critical role at a pivotal time as Eswatini intensifies efforts to strengthen HIV prevention strategies, particularly among young people. He urged the Council to also address emerging health challenges, such as non-communicable diseases affecting people living with HIV.

Despite Eswatini's achievement of the 95-95-95 UN Global targets, the Prime Minister highlighted that 13% of people aware of their HIV-positive status are still not on treatment, stressing the need to find and link them to care. He further noted that approximately 4,000 new HIV infections occur annually, mostly among adolescent girls and young women, emphasising the necessity to bolster prevention efforts.

Under the Council's governance, NERCHA is expected to remain a credible, world-class organisation delivering tangible results for the people of Eswatini. The Council comprises Ntsika Fakudze as Chairperson; Sifiso Dlamini, Legal Officer; Pauline Dlamini, Director of Internal Audit & Risk at PSPF; Hani Dlamini, representing people living with HIV; H.E. Njabuliso Gwebu, former Ambassador and founder of AMICAAL; Eric Seyama, former Early Warning Director at NDMA; Nhlanhla Nhlabatsi, Epidemiologist; Dr. Penuel Gina and Dr. Siphile Msane, both Medical Doctors; Khanyisile Dube, Principal Finance Officer; Rev. Zachariah Mthethwa, Pastor; Zanele Nonhlanhla Dlamini, PS Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development; Dr. Nondumiso Ncube, NERCHA National Executive Director; and Victor Nxumalo, Secretary to Cabinet.

This Council is tasked with advancing Eswatini's HIV response and addressing broader health challenges to improve the well-being of its citizens over the coming years.

By Karabo Ngoepe
karabon@rubiconmedia.group

THE news landed with a heaviness that could be felt well beyond the corridors of Glencore's Ferroalloys division.

In a memo to staff dated 1 September 2025, CEO Japie Fullard confirmed what many in South Africa's mining sector have feared: the company has initiated a Section 189A process under the Labour Relations Act, a formal step toward possible retrenchments and restructuring.

For thousands of workers and their families, it signals an anxious road ahead. For the ferrochrome and vanadium industry, it is another reminder of just how fragile the sector has become.

Fullard did not mince words. South African producers are being crushed by spiralling electricity costs, sluggish global demand, and a wave of cheaper supply from competitors in China and Indonesia. "We are caught in a storm of skyrocketing electricity costs, fierce international competition, and challenging market conditions," Fullard wrote in a memo dated 1 September 2025. "Even with constructive talks with the government, the absence of decisive support means relief is not on the immediate horizon."

The emotional weight of this announcement is felt most keenly by workers at the Boshhoek and Wonderkop Smelters, Rhovan Operations, and the Carbon Division, the

Glencore restructures

... as Ferrochrome Industry Struggles to Survive



heartbeats of Glencore's ferroalloy production. The company is also contemplating scaling down the Lion Smelter and streamlining support functions at Rustenburg, Lydenburg, and the company headquarters. For many, this means facing the terrifying uncertainty of job losses or redeployment.

Fullard sought to reassure, promising the company will continue operations at Rhovan

with a new product focus and organizational structure. But he was clear: "We will confront this process with transparency and inclusivity." To those fearing the unknown, he offered a commitment to honesty and dialogue, making clear that any steps taken will involve consultation with employees and their representatives through the CCMA.

"We are not just a company; we are a fam-

ily," Fullard affirmed, his words echoing the human cost behind the corporate balance sheets. "We deeply value every member of our Ferroalloys family and will strive to navigate these trying times with compassion and respect." Support systems, including counselling services, will be made available as the workforce grapples with the upheaval.

The Section 189A process is far more than a procedural formality, it is a poignant reminder of the frailty of South Africa's ferroalloy sector, a critical yet vulnerable industrial pillar. High energy costs, combined with aggressive competition from China and Indonesia, have squeezed margins to perilous levels. The call for effective government intervention and industry collaboration has never been more urgent.

The move follows in the footsteps of Maloma Colliery Mine in Eswatini, which has taken a similar step. The mine exports its anthracite coal to South Africa and feeds the ferrochrome and smelting industry. The challenges faced by Glencore have affected all players in the sector and this has resulted in a reduction of production and, subsequently, smaller orders from mines such as Maloma.

Nkwe! in motion as 344 new teachers to be hired

By Kwanele Dhladhla

MINISTER of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo has disclosed that 344 new teachers will be hired to fill the gaps in public schools across the Kingdom.

The minister reported that the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) continues to execute its mandate to recruit qualified teachers across the education system. He said they were encouraged by the continued support from the Ministry of Public Service, particularly with the approval of teaching posts.

However, despite this support, Nxumalo pointed out that the reality on the ground remains stark, as the demand for teachers still exceeds the available supply, resulting in persistent vacancies across schools.

"We are pleased to announce that authority was granted to fill 344 teaching posts, a critical step in narrowing the teacher gap. The ministry is currently processing these posts and will ensure they are filled as swiftly and efficiently as possible," said Nxumalo when responding to questions that had been posed by Senators during debate of the ministry's 2025/2026 financial year's first quarter performance report.

The minister went on to state that the rightsizing exercise currently underway across all schools commenced in the pre-



▲ Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo has disclosed that 344 new teachers will be hired to fill the gaps in public schools across the Kingdom.

vious financial year and continues to gain momentum.

Nxumalo said this crucial process, led by the ministry's inspectorate in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Service through the Management Services Department (MSD), centres on thorough data collection and verification.

"Its overarching goal is to ensure the optimal deployment and effective utilisation of human resources in our education system, ensuring that every school has the personnel it needs, and that no resources are misallocated or wasted. The ministry remains committed to creating a lean, efficient, and responsive workforce capable of delivering quality education without compromise," Nxumalo committed.



ICT minister tasks new EPTC board to turn parastatal around in a year

By Kwanele Dhladhla

MINISTER of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT), Savannah Maziya, has issued a strong directive to the newly appointed Eswatini Post and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) board, instructing them to turn around the financially struggling parastatal within a year.

Speaking during the unveiling of the new board at the ministry's offices on Monday, Maziya underscored the urgency of revitalising the corporation, warning that the government could no longer afford to bail it out.

"As most of you know, EPTC is one of the parastatals of our ministry, which we are very, very proud of, and which we want to be successful. We need business-minded individuals who can ensure this institution keeps going, comes up with new ideas, and thrives," she said.

Maziya emphasised that the global business model of post offices, once reliant on mailing letters, was no longer sustainable, hence the need for innovation and partnerships to

keep the corporation afloat.

"We are desperate to have an institution that is self-sufficient in a year or so. We cannot afford to live on the edge; we cannot afford to live this risky life. We need an institution that is credible and self-sufficient," she stressed. She also urged the new board to work with urgency, integrity, and creativity, describing their appointment as a national calling rather than a pursuit of personal gain.

"The executive makes big money you must make them run and deliver an institution the country can be proud of. Have no shame in pushing them. We need an institution that can give us great infrastructure at affordable costs, without burdening

the ministry," Maziya said. The new EPTC board will serve for a three-year term and is chaired by attorney Kwanele Magagula. Other members include Lindiwe Dlamini, Mbali Sibanyoni (MD of Swaziland Building Society), Sibusiso Mndzebele (Standard Bank Eswatini), Siphon Dlamini (retired procurement specialist from Eswatini Sugar Association), Sakhile Dlamini (Ministry representative), Moses Zungu (retained board member), and Thulisile Gamedze (Ministry of Finance representative). Maziya said she had confidence that the mix of business leaders and government representatives would help transform EPTC into a self-sufficient, innovative, and sustainable entity.

EPTC board tasked to appoint new MD

MINISTER of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), Savannah Maziya, has directed the newly appointed Eswatini Post and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) board to urgently appoint a new Managing Director (MD).

This follows the lapse of former

MD Themba Khumalo's contract. Maziya revealed that an acting MD would be announced soon while the recruitment process is underway.

"We need to move quickly on this. The stability of the corporation requires leadership at the helm that will drive the vision and innovation we need," she said.

‘Visit DPMO stall at EITF so to reunite with your long-lost relatives’

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Thulisile Dladla has urged members of the public, who seek to be reunited with their long-lost family members to take advantage of the on-going EITF by visiting the DPMO stall to file their request under the Asibambaneni Sibengumndeni programme.

The DPM shared these sentiments on Monday at Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre during her visit to the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office (DPMO) stall at the Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF).

During her visit, the DPMO, inspected the stall to ensure it was primed and ready for the upcoming visit by Prime Minister (PM) Russell Mmiso Dlamini on Wednesday and His Majesty King Mswati III, who will be officially opening the EITF on Saturday.

Asibambaneni Sibengumndeni, a programme under the DPMO, is a reality series aired on Eswatini TV, whose main aim is to reunite families.

According to the DPM, who mentioned that the viewership of the programme has tremendously grown as they were receiving many calls from different people, who were also requesting assistance of being reunited with their families after watching it, she was urging Emaswati, who wanted to be reunited with their long-lost family members, particularly elderly people, to visit their stall at the EITF and file their request.

“Even those who know elderly people, who stay alone after being abandoned by their children or grandchildren, can also visit our stall to report the matter,” she said.

She pointed out that they have their own



▲ The Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla has urged the nation to visit DPMO stall at the Trade Fair.

way with her team of tracking those who have lost touch with their loved ones.

She said the aim of tracking those who no longer had a close relationship with their family members was not to embarrass them, but to assist them reunite with their loved ones.

Meanwhile, according to the DPM, upon visiting the stall, she was very impressed, since she discovered that her team did a wonderful job in so far as setting up the stall was concerned. However, she said there were very few touch ups that they needed to make there and there, otherwise the stall was set up perfectly fine.

She mentioned that she was also taken

aback upon discovering that her team was well able to articulate precisely and accurately the services offered by the DPMO to members of the public who visited the stall.

She stated that members of the public were coming out in their numbers to register different kinds of issues in which they were requiring the intervention of the DPMO.

The DPM stated that when they get back to the office, they will then be in a position to classify the issues based on the categories under which they fall, such as social welfare, persons with disabilities or Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) amongst others.

“It will then be easier for us to make follow ups and then offer the required services

to the members of the public,” she said.

She stated that DPMO was also providing counselling at a safe space situated within their stall.

The DPM added that they also had a television set at the stall, which was displaying the different programmes offered by the DPMO, such as Asibambaneni Sibengumndeni programme, the Eswatini National Job and Entrepreneurial Expo for Persons with Disabilities and the first-ever Eswatini Persons with Disabilities Music and Arts Festival to be held on September 27, to name a few. Listening attentively as an official from the DPMO explains to her some of the services offered at the stall.

Eswatini joins continental drive to silence the guns

Stories by Taonga Nkhata

ESWATINI has joined the rest of Africa in the continental effort to rid communities of illegal firearms through the African Union’s flagship campaign, “Silencing the Guns.”

This initiative was first endorsed in May 2013 during the African Union’s Golden Jubilee celebrations, when heads of state and government signed the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration.

The African Union Commission Chairperson at the time, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, presented Agenda 2063, a blueprint for Africa’s development that outlined the vision to end all wars, violent conflicts, gender-based violence, and genocides on the continent.

One of the key projects under Agenda 2063 was the pledge to silence guns by 2020. Although the deadline was missed, the AU continues to push for the realization of the goal. September of each year has since been declared Africa Amnesty Month for the voluntary surrender and collection of illegally owned



▲ NatCom Vusi Manoma Masango (c) delivering his remarks during the press briefing.

firearms.

Under this initiative, individuals who surrender their firearms during amnesty are guaranteed protection from disclosure, humiliation, arrest, or prosecution. However, those who fail to do so are deemed to violate national laws and the AU declaration and may face prosecution.

Speaking at the launch of the 2025 Amnesty Month in Mbabane, National Commissioner of Police (NatCom) Vusi Manoma Masango said the country remains deeply concerned about the proliferation of illegal firearms and their role in violent crime.

“We held the Amnesty Month last

year, in 2024, but only one firearm was surrendered. This was even though crimes involving illegal firearms remain very high, claiming innocent lives and causing untold suffering,” he said.

He attributed the low turnout to inadequate publicity as well as the deliberate refusal by perpetrators of crime to comply. “It is for this reason that the country launches and declares this September 2025 as a month through which members of the public are urged to surrender all illegally possessed firearms without fear of being arrested and prosecuted,” he added.

... REPS seize 43 firearms, 297 live rounds of ammunition in almost a year

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has confiscated 43 firearms and 297 live rounds of ammunition between October 1, 2024, and August 31, 2025.

During the same period, the police commissioner revealed disturbing statistics that a total of 95 suspects were arrested for being found in possession of illegal firearms.

Of these, 81 were EmaSwati, while the remainder were foreign nationals. “Among those arrested were also women, which is another cause of concern, as women are generally regarded as non-violent in most instances,” Masango said.

NatCom appealed to the public to take this year’s Amnesty Month seriously and support efforts to rid communities of illegal guns. “We call on every liSwati to attach significance to this initiative, so that not only are the guns silenced, but they are also completely removed from our

communities,” he said.

He emphasized that the proliferation of firearms fuels violent crime and disrupts livelihoods. “The statistics are a clear indication that we are faced with a heavy task of eliminating this criminality as a country,” he said.

NatCom assured the nation that the police remain committed to protecting lives and property in collaboration with all stakeholders. “As per our operational mantra, Sikhona, the Royal Eswatini Police Service exists to serve as a safety and security buffer for the nation. We will continue to work with everyone in the crime-fighting value chain to ensure that illegal firearms are seized and do not stay in the hands of criminals,” he said.

He further encouraged members of the public to provide information on illegal firearms, assuring them that their anonymity would be guaranteed.

Businessman donates E20 000 to Siphila Nabo Campaign

Stories by Thokozeni Mazibuko

ERIC Slabbert Shop has donated new clothes worth over E20 000 to Siphila Nabo National Clothing Collection Campaign.

This was confirmed by the Chairman of Philani Maswati Charity Organisation Lutfo Dlamini.

Siphila Nabo National Clothing Collection Campaign is a clothing collection campaign, which was launched last week by Philani Maswati Charity Organisation in partnership with Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA).

The aforementioned organisations joined hands to serve the less privileged by collecting and distributing new and gently used clothing

The campaign aims 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.

According to Dlamini, the clothes were taken to ADRA warehouse shortly after the donation.

“The clothes have already been delivered to the ADRA warehouse, ready to bring hope and dignity to those in need. You too can be part of this movement of love. Donate new or gently used clothing and help us spread warmth to families across Eswatini. Together, we can clothe a nation,” he said.

He urged those who wanted to lend a helping hand to contact them at 76304229 or 76145197 to make their donation.

Meanwhile, Dlamini stated during the official launch of the campaign last week at Baphalali Red Cross warehouse that this campaign was an effort to give every Liswati an opportunity to lend a helping hand to the less privileged.

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



Eric Slabbert Shop has donated new clothes worth over E20 000 to Siphila Nabo National Clothing Collection Campaign.

dustries, where Emaswati will drop the clothes.

He said the plastic bags will be distributed across the country's four regions, where there was Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society offices and Clinics as well as 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 will run throughout the month of September.

Police seek help in identifying owner of clothes abandoned in Hluthi

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has appealed to members of the public to assist in identifying the owner of a collection of clothes found abandoned in Hluthi Town.

According to a police statement issued this week, the items were discovered inside a black refuse plastic bag that had been left near a waiting room along the road leading towards Nhlanguano.

The clothing was reportedly left behind by two unidentified men who fled the area under unclear circumstances. “The Royal Eswatini Police Service is seeking public assistance in finding the owner of these clothes that were abandoned by two men. They were found in a black refuse plastic bag at Hluthi Town, next to a waiting room towards Nhlanguano direction,” the statement reads.

The police did not immediately disclose details about the clothing items but confirmed that they are being held as part of an ongoing investigation. Authorities are working to establish whether the clothes were

stolen property, evidence linked to a crime, or simply discarded belongings.

Police urged anyone who may have recently lost clothing items or has information about the two men seen leaving the bag behind to come forward. “We encourage members of the public with relevant information to report to their nearest police station or contact investigators directly. All information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality,” the statement emphasized.

The unusual discovery has raised curiosity among Hluthi residents, with many speculating about the circumstances leading to the men abandoning the bag. Community leaders have also encouraged residents to cooperate with the police to help resolve the matter.

It is worth mentioning that this incident adds to a series of recent cases where abandoned goods have been recovered in public areas, sparking concern over possible theft, smuggling, or other criminal activities in the region.

Police investigations are ongoing.



Former Ndzingeni Member of Parliament Lutfo Dlamini displaying some of the donated clothes by Eric Slabbert Agencies shop for the Siphila Nabo Campaigng.





LOMATI

Driven by discipline. Defined by Gold

“MISSION”

We are dedicated to responsible mining and processing gold using efficient heap leaching techniques, delivering value to our stakeholders and communities, while prioritizing safety, environmental stewardship, and operational excellence.

OUR CORE VALUES

- EXCELLENCE
- DISCIPLINE
- INNOVATION
- INTEGRITY
- UNITY





Mine Manager +268 24317258/ +26878026641

Maqhawe@lomatinine.gold

lomatinine.gold

Nazarene High school teacher allegedly brutalised by cops



▲ The teacher, whose name is withheld pending further proceedings, was arrested on Friday last week, after police claimed he was found driving under the influence.

By Delisa Magagula

A 46-year-old teacher from Manzini Nazarene High School appeared before the Mbabane Magistrate's Court on Monday facing charges of drunken driving, but the hearing took an unexpected turn when he alleged that police officers brutalized him during his arrest.

The teacher, whose name is withheld pending further proceedings, was arrested on Friday last week, after police claimed he was found driving under the influence.

He was later charged with contravening the Road Traffic Act by operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated. His alcohol reading was 1.56 mg.

According to evidence before the court, police officers intercepted the teacher after he allegedly failed to comply with traffic signals and was seen swerving along the roadside late at night.

A roadside breathalyser test was conducted, registering 1.56mg blood alcohol concentration well above the legal limit.

The prosecution submitted that the results were conclusive evidence of drunken driving, pointing out that the accused was incapable

of controlling his vehicle safely.

However, during mitigation, the accused made startling claims about what transpired during his arrest. He told the court that he was subjected to excessive force by officers from the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS).

"They beat me with their fists on my face and neck," he testified, his voice low but steady.

"They also strangled me, used planks on my body, and even pulled at my mouth because I was not cooperating with their instructions," added the teacher.

The accused admitted he had been reluctant to comply with certain directives at the time of his arrest, which, he explained, stemmed from fear and confusion.

"Yes, I did not cooperate immediately, but the treatment I received was inhuman," he said.

He further alleged that the police continued to assault him even after the breathalyser test confirmed he was intoxicated.

"I was already subdued, but they kept hitting me," he told the court.

The claims cast a shadow over the trial, raising broader concerns about the conduct of law enforcement officers in Eswatini. Allegations of police brutality have surfaced in previous cases, though they often remain untested in court.

Bruises and injuries

In this instance, the accused insisted that his bruises and injuries were evidence of what he endured. He pleaded with the court to consider not only the circumstances of his offence but also the way he was treated in custody.

"The punishment I suffered that night went beyond what the law allows," he said.

The Crown, represented by the prosecution, argued that the drunken driving charge was distinct from any alleged mistreatment by police officers.

The prosecutor noted that while the court could not ignore the seriousness of the allegations, the matter of police conduct would need to be addressed through a separate complaint or investigation.

"What is before this court is the offense of drunken driving," the prosecutor said.

"If the accused feels his rights were violated, the proper channel is to lodge a complaint with the relevant authorities. That does not take away from the fact that he was found intoxicated while driving,"

The prosecution emphasized the dangers of drunken driving, pointing to the potential risks posed to other road users.

"His actions could have led to accidents, injuries, or fatalities," the Crown argued, urging the magistrate to impose a penalty that would serve both as deterrence

and punishment.

In mitigation, the teacher pleaded for leniency, citing his client's long-standing career in the education sector and his role as a family man.

The attorney stressed that the accused had already endured significant suffering because of the alleged police assault.

Presiding over the matter, Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi acknowledged the seriousness of both the charge and the allegations raised.

"This court takes note of the claim of police brutality. While that issue may not be for this court to adjudicate in full, it is nonetheless concerning and should be investigated further," the magistrate said.

Judgment

She reserved judgment on sentencing, indicating that a written ruling would be delivered after careful consideration of the submissions.

"Drunken driving is a grave offense that endangers the lives of many, but the circumstances of arrest as narrated by the accused also deserve to be factored into the court's decision," she noted.

The matter has been moved to September 21, when the accused is expected to make his approved deferred payment. The adjournment allows time for the court to finalize sentencing and for the accused to prepare for compliance with the payment order.

The case has attracted public attention, as it touches on two pressing issues in Eswatini, road safety and allegations of police misconduct.

Road accidents linked to alcohol remain a persistent concern, with authorities warning drivers against drinking and driving. At the same time, civic organizations have repeatedly called for greater accountability within the police service to curb allegations of excessive force.

For now, the teacher awaits sentencing, with the possibility of facing a fine, license suspension, or imprisonment. Meanwhile, questions linger over the alleged brutality he described, and whether his claims will prompt further action against the officers involved.

Meanwhile the Mbabane Magistrate's Court prepares to deliver its ruling, the case remains a stark reminder of the delicate balance between enforcing the law and upholding individual rights.

For the accused, the night that began with a few drinks and ended in handcuffs has now spilled into a public courtroom battle, raising questions that extend beyond his own actions to the very conduct of those entrusted with enforcing justice.

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

Take up manufacturing space — Minister Khumalo

THE Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo has urged the entrepreneurs to take up the manufacturing industry to avoid importing services. He said local entrepreneurs have the potential to create and circulate the economy within the country. Khumalo was speaking during the Industrial Finance seminar hosted by Eswatini National Industrial Development Corporation (ENIDC) at Eswatini International Trade Fair on Monday.

Dollar hits lowest since end-July ahead of US jobs data

THE dollar hit a five-week low on Monday as investors looked ahead to a raft of U.S. labour market data this week that could affect expectations for the Federal Reserve's monetary easing path. Traders were also assessing Friday's U.S. inflation figures and a court ruling that most of Donald Trump's tariffs are illegal, as well as the U.S. president's ongoing tussle with the Fed over his attempt to fire Governor Lisa Cook.

Oil rises on weaker dollar, supply disruptions

LONDON — Oil prices rose by more than 1 per cent on Monday on concern over supply disruptions stemming from intensified Russia-Ukraine airstrikes as well as a weaker dollar. Brent crude was up 83 cents, or 1.2 per cent, at \$68.31 a barrel by 1215 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude also rose 83 cents, or 1.3 per cent, to \$64.84. Trading is expected to be muted because of a U.S. public holiday.

E1.5mln earmarked for textile, clothing MSMEs

By Delisa Magagula

ON day four of the Eswatini International Trade Fair's business seminar series, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo unveiled a significant financing initiative aimed at revitalizing Eswatini's industrial sector.

The government has earmarked E1.5 million annually to support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the textile and clothing industry through an enhanced Production Incentive Scheme, known as PIS 2.0.

The announcement, made during a high-level seminar on Industrial Finance attended by ministers, Members of Parliament, senior government officials, private sector leaders, and international partners, underscores Eswatini's renewed commitment to industrialization and job creation.

The textile and clothing industry remains a cornerstone of employment in Eswatini, particularly for women and youth. Recognizing both its potential and its recent struggles, the Ministry has reactivated the Production Incentive Scheme in a revamped format.

The scheme will provide, 100% grants to eligible enterprises and interest-free working capital loans valid for three months.

Through these facilities, PIS 2.0 seeks to strengthen competitiveness, foster innovation, and improve production processes in the textile sector.

Phase one, set to run over the next five years, will prioritize MSMEs. From FY 2026/27, phase two will expand to include larger companies.

The Minister highlighted that while Eswatini has historically led the region in manufacturing value addition, the sector has experienced a decline in recent years.

This trend threatens not only industrial growth but also job security. In response, the Eswatini National Industrial Development Corporation (ENIDC) has been tasked with creating sector-specific funds to reignite growth and resilience.

"Our mission is not just about funding projects for profitability but about restoring government's public responsibility," said the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo.

He further said, they must prioritize projects that strengthen local value chains and ensure that industrial MSMEs are not just included but empowered to participate in the growth of our economy with ease and confidence.

The ENIDC is working closely with South Africa's Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), which has long played a supportive role in financing industrial projects across the region.

This collaboration, described by the Minister as one between a 'big brother and partner' is expected to co-fund initiatives in Eswatini that promote competitiveness and integration into the regional economy.

The Minister lauded the partnership as a model of mutual commitment.



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo.

"This partnership we treasure to the fullest as it is built on shared vision, and mutual commitment to regional integration," said the Minister.

Industrial finance, according to the Minister, is not the sole responsibility of government institutions but a shared mission with the private sector.

Commercial banks and development finance institutions have already played a pivotal role in extending financial support to both MSMEs and larger enterprises. Their efforts have helped ensure that every Liswati can contribute meaningfully to the economy.

The new initiatives, particularly PIS 2.0, are designed to broaden access to financial resources and encourage companies to invest in interventions that will improve both processes and quality output. By doing so, the government hopes to create a more inclusive industrial sector that supports sustainable growth.

The Minister emphasized that ENIDC's mission is deeply aligned with the 2023 Industrial Policy objectives and the 'Nkwe' mandate, both of which prioritize industrial development as a catalyst for economic growth.

Strengthening local value chains and fostering inclusion for MSMEs are central to these policy goals.

With E1.5 million set aside annually for grants under PIS 2.0, the government expects to see significant improvements in the productivity and competitiveness of MSMEs in the textile and clothing industry. Addressing the audience, which included captains of industry and private sector representatives, the Minister pledged the unwavering support of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade.

"We are at a critical juncture now. Growth is threatened, but our resolve will remain strong.

The Ministry pledges its unwavering support to all companies pursuing expansion initiatives. We urge you to engage with ENIDC, explore funding opportunities, and become active participants in shaping Eswatini's industrial future," said Khumalo.

Phase one of PIS 2.0, targeting MSMEs, will run through the next five years, with ENIDC leading implementation in close collaboration with the Ministry. From 2026/27, the scheme will broaden its reach to large companies, ensuring that the benefits extend across the sector. The goal is not only to support existing enterprises but also to encourage new players to enter the textile and clothing industry, thereby creating jobs and expanding Eswatini's industrial base.

The Minister closed with a note of gratitude, thanking IDC, South Africa, panellists, and participants for their contributions to the seminar.

"Let us move forward with courage, collaboration, and a shared belief in Eswatini's potential," he said.

The announcement came as part of the Eswatini International Trade Fair's ongoing business seminar series, now in its fourth day.

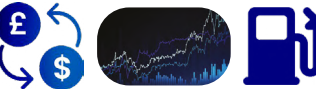
The series has brought together key stakeholders to discuss pressing issues in trade, commerce, and industry, with a focus on practical solutions for economic growth.

With the launch of PIS 2.0 and the earmarking of E1.5 million annually for textile and clothing MSMEs, the government has sent a strong signal of its determination to reinvigorate industrialization, boost employment, and enhance competitiveness. As Eswatini navigates economic challenges, initiatives like these represent both a lifeline and a long-term investment in the country's industrial future.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.2040	17.6889
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	



By Delisa Magagula

THE Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo has urged the entrepreneurs to take up the manufacturing industry to avoid importing services.

He said local entrepreneurs have the potential to create and circulate the economy within the country.

Khumalo was speaking during the Industrial Finance seminar hosted by Eswatini National Industrial Development Corporation (ENIDC) at Eswatini International Trade Fair on Monday.

The event was attended by captains of industry, business people, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), private sector representatives and more.

Different speakers presented on the role of the industrial development finance in unlocking economic growth and employment creation in the country.

He noted that ENIDC was an organisation that also develops some of the best leaders this country has ever seen.

The minister noted that the manufacturing industry contributed 38 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), hence the country being ranked high in the industrialisation index.

He also noted that the mining sector contributed less than 2 per cent which he said was a shame given the country's richness of

the resources.

Khumalo said there was an amazing opportunity not only to grow other sectors of the economy, but also to industrialise which could be more beneficial of minerals in the country.

"Agriculture, if you include forestry and citrus and other things stands at roughly 13 per cent, mostly sugar cane. ENIDC as an organisation therefore exists to ensure the role of government in promoting the under-served sectors of the economy, beneficiation and agro-processing the various raw materials that we have in agriculture and mining, forestry and other things.

"We challenge all of us to think about the next level because those before us have done what they have done to lend us where we are. What is key is to ensure that unemployment problem but also puts this country on a sustainable path to wealth class as Their Majesties have commanded.

"My desire is that we have Caucasian culture where industrialisation is truly embraced because it is very difficult to find a black-owned, Eswatini-owned industrial company in Eswatini," he said.

Take up manufacturing space — Minister Khumalo



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo during the business seminar.

ENIDC disburses E4 million to local enterprises

By Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini National Industrial Development Corporation (ENIDC) has disbursed E4 million to three local enterprises as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen industrial growth and support economic recovery.

These companies, all operating within Eswatini's industrial sector, were identified as strategic players capable of driving productivity and job creation.

The total package amounts to E4 million, allocated as financial support to boost operations, provide working capital, and enable business expansion.

The funding is part of ENIDC's mandate to empower enterprises and ensure that industrial finance reaches businesses that directly impact the local economy.

Lucwembe Investments, Seal Manufacturers and Haminnno Investment are the four companies that received these disbursements.

The announcement was made during the ongoing Eswatini International Trade Fair business seminar series, which has brought together government officials, private sector leaders, and international partners to discuss ways of revitalizing the economy.

The disbursement forms part of the corporation's 2025 industrial finance initiatives. The update was shared at the Eswatini International Trade Fair in Manzini, where ENIDC highlighted its role in driving inclusive industrial financing.

The Trade Fair has served as a platform for unveiling key government and corporate initiatives aimed at boosting the economy.

According to ENIDC, this funding demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that industrial growth translates into real opportunities for Eswatini businesses. By supporting



▲ Some of the delegates during the business seminar.

Lucwembe Investments, Seal Manufacturers, and Haminnno Investment, ENIDC hopes to:

1. Improve competitiveness in local industries
2. Strengthen supply chains
3. Support job creation for Swati citizens
4. Promote financial inclusion among enterprises.

ENIDC noted that the disbursement is part of a broader government-backed effort to restore confidence in Eswatini's industrial sector, following recent declines in manufacturing activity.

The corporation emphasized that such interventions are designed to help businesses innovate, scale up, and sustain operations in a challenging economic climate.

The three companies are expected to use the funds to enhance operations, modernize

equipment, and explore new market opportunities.

ENIDC has pledged to continue monitoring progress while rolling out additional funding opportunities for other enterprises across key industries.

This development highlights government's broader vision of empowering companies through targeted financial support, ensuring that industrial financing not only fuels growth but also creates tangible results for communities across Eswatini.

During this event the Minister mentioned that, the role of industrial finance in Eswatini is not confined to Government corridors but it is a shared mission with the private sector.

He further said Commercial banks and development finance institutions have played a pivotal role in extending support to our

MSMEs and large enterprises.

Their efforts have helped in ensuring that every Liswati has a chance to contribute meaningfully to our economy.

"The ENIDC, under the mandate of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, has been entrusted with a mission that touches the very heart of our communities. It is not just about funding projects for profitability but about restoring Government's public responsibility," he said.

In addition he said his mission is deeply aligned with the 2023 Industrial Policy objectives and the 'Nkwe' mandate.

"We must prioritize projects that strengthen local value chains and ensure that industrial MSMEs are not just included but empowered to participate in the growth of our economy with ease and confidence," said Khumalo.

Dollar hits lowest since end-July ahead of US jobs data

By Stefano Rebaudo

THE dollar hit a five-week low on Monday as investors looked ahead to a raft of U.S. labour market data this week that could affect expectations for the Federal Reserve's monetary easing path.

Traders were also assessing Friday's U.S. inflation figures and a court ruling that most of Donald Trump's tariffs are illegal, as well as the U.S. president's ongoing tussle with the Fed over his attempt to fire Governor Lisa Cook.

Money markets have recently priced an around 90 per cent chance of a 25 basis-point Fed rate cut in September and around 100 bps of easing by autumn 2026, according to the CME FedWatch tool.

Against a basket of currencies, the dollar eased 0.22 per cent to 97.64, after hitting 97.534, its lowest level since July 28. It clocked a monthly decline of 2.2 per cent on Friday.

Investors will be focussed on Friday's U.S. nonfarm payrolls report, which will be preceded by data on job openings and private payrolls.

Analysts said the U.S. economy is no longer outperforming as it did for much of the past decade, justifying a weaker dollar, and further signs of a softening labour market are expected to bolster that narrative.

"Severe weakness (in economic data)



▲ U.S. one hundred dollar notes are seen in this picture illustration.

would point to an even more forceful Fed response than market pricing predicts," Societe Generale economist Klaus Baader said.

"But if May/June weakness is revealed as a statistical mirage, rate cuts would seem unwarranted given the almost certain prospect of rising inflation over the next year or so."

Some analysts still see the chance of a 50 basis-point move by the Fed later this month.

The euro was up 0.32 per cent at \$1.1719, while sterling edged 0.16 per cent higher to \$1.3525. U.S. markets are closed for a holiday

on Monday.

Political risks are in focus as the French government faces likely defeat in a confidence vote over plans for sweeping budget cuts.

Analysts noted that such risks tend to weigh on the currency only when there are clear signs of contagion within the euro area, something that is not evident at the moment.

Investors are keeping a close eye on trade policy while the U.S. continues negotiations with key trading partners.

"We do not see much market impact from the court ruling," Jefferies economist Mohit

Kumar said.

"The matter would pass on to the Supreme Court, which is likely to rule in favour of Trump."

The greenback has also been weighed down by worries over Fed independence, as Trump steps up his campaign to exert more influence over monetary policy.

"Fiscal dominance risks should be more clearly apparent in both higher long-end U.S. inflation break-evens and a higher risk discount on the dollar, none of which is materializing yet," George Saravelos, global head of forex research at Deutsche Bank, said.

"Fiscal dominance" refers to a scenario where central banks are pressured to ease monetary policy to help finance large budget deficits.

The dollar was roughly unchanged at 147.00 against the yen after a monthly decline of 2.5 per cent in August.

The onshore yuan steadied to 7.1344, snapping a six-day falling streak. It dropped to 7.1260 on Friday, its lowest level since President Trump's U.S. election victory in early November 2024.

"By setting the daily fixes lower, the PBoC has signalled that policymakers in China are more comfortable to allow the renminbi to strengthen in the near term against the U.S. dollar," said Lee Hardman, senior currency analyst at MUFG.

Such a move "could be a reflection that Chinese policymakers are less concerned over downside risks to growth in the near term", he added. (Reuters)

Oil rises on weaker dollar, supply disruptions

By Seher Dareen

LONDON — Oil prices rose by more than 1 per cent on Monday on concern over supply disruptions stemming from intensified Russia-Ukraine airstrikes as well as a weaker dollar.

Brent crude was up 83 cents, or 1.2 per cent, at \$68.31 a barrel by 1215 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude also rose 83 cents, or 1.3 per cent, to \$64.84. Trading is expected to be muted because of a U.S. public holiday.

Brent and WTI crude registered their first monthly declines in four months in August, losing 6 per cent or more on increased supply from the OPEC+ producer group.

"Crude fell in August and has started September with no clear direction within established ranges as fears of a fourth-quarter supply glut are offset by geopolitical tensions," said Ole Hansen, head of commodity strategy at Saxo Bank.

Investors were focused on Beijing, where Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are attending a regional summit. Also on the radar was OPEC+ meeting on September 7, Hansen added.

Markets remain concerned about Russian oil flows, with weekly shipments from its ports dropping to a four-week low of 2.72 million barrels per day (bpd), according to



▲ A view shows a pressure gauge near oil pump jacks outside Almet'yevsk, in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia.

tanker tracker data cited by ANZ analysts.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed on Sunday to retaliate with more strikes deep inside Russia after Russian drone attacks on power facilities in northern and southern Ukraine.

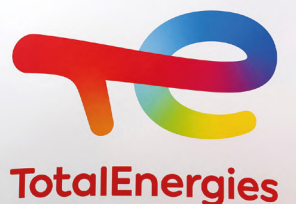
Both countries have intensified airstrikes in recent weeks, targeting energy infrastructure and disrupting Russian oil exports.

A Reuters poll on Friday showed that oil prices are unlikely to gain much from current levels this year, as rising output from top producers adds to the risk of a surplus and U.S. tariff threats weigh on demand growth.

Coming out of the summer season, oil inventories should rise in the last quarter of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026, HSBC analysts said in a note, with a surplus of 1.6 million barrels per day in the fourth quarter.

Elsewhere, the U.S. labour market report this week will give a read on the economy's health and test investor confidence that interest rate cuts are coming soon, a view that has strengthened appetite for riskier assets such as commodities.

Ahead of the data, the dollar was close to a five-week low on Monday, making oil less expensive for buyers using other currencies. (Reuters)



TotalEnergies wins exploration permit in Congo Republic

FRENCH oil major TotalEnergies has been awarded an exploration permit for the Nzombo area off the coast of the Republic of Congo, close to its already operational Moho facilities, it said on Monday.

TotalEnergies said it will operate the asset with a 50 per cent stake, while QatarEnergy will hold a 35 per cent interest and Congo's national oil company SNPC the remainder.

The permit is for a 1,000 square km area located 100 km off the coast of Pointe Noire, and would add to a portfolio of "high-impact prospects", said Kevin McLachlan, TotalEnergies' senior vice-president for exploration.

The work programme includes the drilling of one exploration well, which is expected to begin before the end of 2025, the company said. TotalEnergies currently produces 65,000 barrels of oil per day in the Republic of Congo, mostly through offshore wells.

SNPC also owns 15 per cent of the Moho production facilities, according to TotalEnergies' website. (Reuters)



Eswatini Mobile rolls out VoLTE

BY EDN Reporter

Eswatini Mobile has taken another bold step in advancing telecommunications in the country by introducing Voice over LTE (VoLTE), becoming the first network operator in Eswatini to commercially roll out the service.

VoLTE is a modern technology that allows users to make traditional voice calls over the packet-based 4G network instead of the older circuit-based

networks.

Unlike 3G calls, VoLTE delivers calls faster and with high-definition clarity by default, setting a new standard in voice communication.

For the average Eswatini Mobile user, VoLTE translates to an instant call connection and crystal-clear voice quality, often described as “near-natural sound.” More importantly, VoLTE ensures that customers can continue to browse, stream, or use apps seamlessly while on a call, something that 3G calls often interrupted.

“VoLTE enhances the customer experience by combining speed and clarity without requiring any additional devices,” said Eswatini Mobile Transmission Manager Philani Simelane. “The service works on most Apple iPhones, and support for Samsung devices will soon follow.”

The company has assured customers that no SIM upgrade is required if their device already supports 4G. VoLTE is accessible anywhere in the country with 4G coverage, making it a nationwide rollout. Additionally, the service comes at no extra cost, VoLTE calls are billed the same as traditional 3G voice calls and do not consume data bundles.

Customers can also make both local and international calls on VoLTE, including to numbers on other networks or non-VoLTE devices.

Eswatini Mobile emphasized that the launch of VoLTE reflects its commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction. “We are not just keeping up with technology, we are setting the pace in Eswatini,” Simelane noted.



Looking ahead, the operator confirmed that video calling over LTE and 5G is among the innovations in the pipeline, supported by the ongoing expansion of its 5G coverage.

According to Simelane, the company is also working to ensure that Eswatini Mobile subscribers can enjoy VoLTE while roaming in the SADC region, provided the roaming networks support the

technology.

With this launch, Eswatini Mobile has positioned itself ahead of competitors, offering customers a future-ready calling experience that blends clarity, reliability, and modern convenience.

For assistance with setup or troubleshooting, customers can continue to use Eswatini Mobile’s usual support helpline.



▲ Philani Simelane.

eswatini
MOBILE
Your Affordable Network

Experience Ultra-Fast Internet with Our New 5G Router!

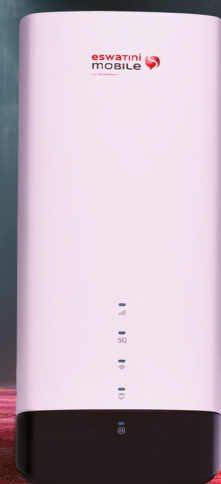
Now available for
E3,300⁰⁰
Cash

On Contract
E330⁰⁰
P/M Over 12 Months

Layby: 50% upfront, pay over 3 Months.

Terms and Conditions Apply.

For more information dial 980 or visit any Eswatini Mobile Experience Centre.



eswatini
MOBILE
5G

www.eswatini-mobile.co.sz



Benin's ruling parties pick finance minister Wadagni as presidential candidate

BENIN'S ruling coalition has nominated Finance Minister Romuald Wadagni to contest the 2026 presidential election, positioning a man seen as a key architect of its economic policies to pursue the administration's current reform agenda if elected.

President Patrice Talon has confirmed he will step down after two terms, a rare move in the West and Central African region where democratic norms are increasingly under pressure.

Two ruling parties, the Republican Bloc and the Progressive Union for Renewal, endorsed Wadagni, citing his experience and alignment with

Talon's development agenda. They urged activists and coalition members to support their choice, statements showed on Sunday.

Wadagni, a former Deloitte executive, joined the government in 2016 and as minister of economy and finance led reforms to strengthen public finances and fund infrastructure.

"He thus appears to be one of the best placed to continue and deepen the development actions initiated since 2016," the Republican Bloc party's statement said.

The Progressive Union for Renewal party said that despite political stability and economic dynamism Benin still faced many challenges such as youth employment and pur-

chasing power.

Political analyst Fidele Ayena told Reuters the selection reflects strong internal consensus and avoids the need for primaries, crediting Talon's personal endorsement.

The presidents of other West and Central African countries plan to run for new terms this year, seeking to extend mandates beyond what was legally possible when they first took office.

Alassane Ouattara runs for a fourth term in Ivory Coast, Paul Biya for an eighth term in Cameroon and Faustin-Archange Touadera for a third term in Central African Republic.

(Reuters)

ArcelorMittal South Africa job cuts could rise above 4,000, union says

ARCELOMITTAL South Africa, opens new tab, opens new tab is planning to lay off 4,000 workers, nearly half its workforce and more than initially expected, with cuts now set to extend to its main Vanderbijlpark plants, a union said on Monday.

The steelmaker previously announced plans to shut its long steel plants at Newcastle and Vereeniging this month, cutting 3,500 jobs, as talks with the government have failed to provide an alternative solution. AMSA said it was "limited in what we can say in the public domain given the complexities of the matters under discussion and a cautionary announcement we issued recently", adding that "certain processes are still ongoing."

The company produces some 2.4 million metric tons of steel annually, about 4% of group output.

The Solidarity union said AMSA had told employees that it was preparing "mass re-

trenchments involving more than 4,000 jobs".

Its statement said the cuts had been expanded to include Vanderbijlpark - AMSA's flagship operation, making flat steel.

The company has been reporting losses since 2023 and posted a half-year headline loss of 1.0 billion rand (\$56 million) on persistently low sales volumes and low prices.

AMSA has twice deferred closing its long steel operations, which are buckling under the pressure of weak local demand, high electricity tariffs, poor freight logistics, competition from local scrap recycling mills and imports from China.

The union accused the government of dragging its heels in seeking solutions.

AMSA had asked the government to lower scrap export duties, which it says give recyclers an unfair advantage, and to impose tariffs on imports. It also sought favourable electricity and freight costs from state-owned utilities. (Reuters)



Angola plans first output at Cabinda oil refinery by year-end

ANGOLA'S planned 30,000-barrel-per-day Cabinda oil refinery, the first to be built since independence a half-century ago, will begin producing fuel by year-end, the Southern African country's oil and gas minister said on Monday.

The project, which will be Angola's second oil refinery, will help make sub-Saharan Africa's No.2 crude producer less dependent on costly fuel imports amid government efforts to eliminate fuel subsidies that have triggered deadly protests.

"Today we can confirm that the Cabinda refinery is entering its decisive phase and that by the end of the year, Angola will have the first commercial derivatives produced at this unit," Diamantino Azevedo, the oil and gas minister,

said at an inauguration ceremony also attended by Angola's president.

Gemcorp, a London-based emerging markets investment firm, is the largest shareholder in the plant and previously said the first phase would supply 5-10% of the country's fuel needs.

State-owned oil company Sonangol holds the remaining 10% shareholding and supplies the refinery with feedstock.

Angola imports around 72% of its domes-

tic fuel consumption or some 3.3 million metric tons of refined petroleum products each year, according to Sonangol.

Investment for the first phase reached \$500 million to \$550 million, Gemcorp told Reuters last year, higher than initial estimates as costs rose due to the pandemic and inflation.

A second phase is expected to take crude processing capacity up to 60,000 bpd and bring a diesel and jet fuel-producing hydrocracking unit online.

Azevedo said construction of the proposed 100,000 bpd Soyo refinery was under review due to constraints presented by the private developer, U.S.-led Quanten Consortium.

However, construction of the Lobito refinery would restart after a thorough review and "significant cost reduction," Azevedo said without providing further details.

Earlier this year, an executive at Sonangol told Reuters it was in talks with Chinese and European banks to overcome a \$4.8-billion funding shortfall for the 200,000 bpd Lobito refinery.

(Reuters)



▲ Angolan Minister of Mineral Resources, Petroleum and Gas, Diamantino Azevedo speaks during the Investing in African Mining Indaba 2023 conference in Cape Town, South Africa..

Afghanistan earthquake kills 800, injures 2,800, Taliban asks world for help

ONE of Afghanistan's worst earthquakes killed more than 800 people and injured at least 2,800, authorities said on Monday, as rescuers struggled to reach remote areas due to rough mountainous terrain and inclement weather.

The disaster will further stretch the resources of the war-torn nation's Taliban administration, already grappling with crises ranging from a sharp drop in foreign aid to deportations of hundreds of thousands of Afghans by neighbouring countries.

Sharafat Zaman, spokesperson for the health ministry in Kabul, called for international aid to tackle the devastation wrought by the quake of magnitude 6 that struck around midnight local time, at a depth of 10 km (6 miles).

"We need it because here lots of people lost their lives and houses," he told Reuters.

The quake killed 812 people in the eastern provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar, administration spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

Ziaul Haq Mohammadi, a student at Al-Falah University in the eastern city of Jalalabad, was studying in his room at home when the quake struck. He said he tried to stand up but was knocked over by the power of the tremor.

"We spent the whole night in fear and anxiety because at any moment another earthquake could happen," Mohammadi said.

Rescuers were battling to reach remote mountainous areas cut off from mobile networks along the Pakistani border, where mudbrick homes dotting the slopes collapsed in the quake.

"The area of the earthquake was affected by heavy rain in the last 24-48 hours as well, so the risk of landslides and rock slides is also quite significant - that is why many of the roads are impassable," Kate Carey, an officer at the U.N. Office for the Coordination



▲ Afghan men search for their belongings amidst the rubble of a collapsed house after a deadly magnitude-6 earthquake that struck Afghanistan around midnight, in Dara Mazar, in Kunar province, Afghanistan.

of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), told Reuters.

Rescue teams and authorities are trying to dispose of animal carcasses quickly so as to minimise the risk of contamination to water resources, Carey said.

Casualties could rise as rescue teams access more isolated locations, authorities said.

"All our ... teams have been mobilised to accelerate assistance, so that comprehensive and full support can be provided," said health ministry spokesperson Abdul Maten Qanee, citing efforts in areas from security to food and health.

Reuters Television images showed helicopters ferrying out the affected, while residents helped security forces and medics carry the wounded to ambulances in an area with a long history of earthquakes and

floods.

Military rescue teams fanned out across the region, the defence ministry said in a statement, with 40 flights carrying away 420 wounded and dead.

The quake razed three villages in Kunar, with substantial damage in many others, authorities said. At least 610 people were killed in Kunar with 12 dead in Nangarhar, they added.

It was Afghanistan's third major deadly quake since the Taliban took over in 2021 as foreign forces withdrew, triggering a cut to the international funding that formed the bulk of government finances.

Diplomats and aid officials say crises elsewhere in the world, along with donor frustration over the Taliban's policies towards women, including curbs on those who are aid workers, have spurred the cuts in fund-

ing.

Even humanitarian aid, aimed at bypassing political institutions to serve urgent needs, has shrunk to \$767 million this year, down from \$3.8 billion in 2022.

APPEALS FOR FUNDING

Humanitarian agencies say they are fighting a forgotten crisis in Afghanistan, where the United Nations estimates more than half the population is in urgent need of humanitarian aid.

"So far, no foreign governments have reached out to provide support for rescue or relief work," a spokesperson of Afghanistan's foreign office said on Monday.

Later, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry said it was ready to provide disaster relief assistance "according to Afghanistan's needs and within its capacity".

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar of India said it had delivered 1,000 family tents to Kabul and was moving 15 tonnes of food material to Kunar, with more relief material to be sent from India starting Tuesday.

U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres said its mission in Afghanistan was preparing to help those in areas devastated by the quake. Pope Leo also sent condolences for the dead.

A 6.1-magnitude earthquake that killed 1,000 people in the eastern region in 2022 was the first major natural disaster faced by the Taliban government.

Humanitarian officials and locals say almost two years after a powerful tremor hit the western city of Herat, many villages are still recovering and living in temporary structures.

Afghanistan is prone to deadly earthquakes, particularly in the Hindu Kush mountain range, where the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates meet.

(Reuters)

Trump says India offered to reduce tariffs on US goods to zero

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday that India has offered to reduce its tariffs on U.S. goods to zero, even as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was making public shows of solidarity with Chinese and Russian leaders in the face of trade pressure from Washington.

While calling the U.S. relationship with India "one sided," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform: "They have now offered to cut their Tariffs to nothing, but it's getting late. They should have done so years ago."

The Indian Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to Trump's comments, which follow the implementation of total duties as high as 50% on Indian goods that have raised questions about the future of the U.S.-India relationship.

Trump's remark came as Modi was in China for a summit of more than 20 leaders of non-Western countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, a China-backed initiative given renewed impetus by Trump's global tariff offensive. "We only get water at home twice a week, so people are forced to come here," said Umm Ziad, as she filled empty plastic bottles with water alongside other Ramallah residents. Settlers have taken over the spring that many Palestinians have used for generations to cool off in the hot summer months.

Palestinian public utility Jerusalem Water Undertaking said the Ein Samiya water

distribution station had become a frequent target of settler vandalism.

"Settler violence has escalated dramatically," Abdullah Bairait, 60, a resident of nearby Kfar Malik, standing on a hilltop overlooking the spring.

"They enter the spring stations, break them, remove cameras, and cut off the water for hours," he said.

The Ein Samiya spring and Kfar Malik village have been increasingly surrounded by Jewish Israeli settlements. The United Nations and most foreign governments consider settlements in the West Bank to be illegal under international law and an obstacle to the establishment of a future Palestinian state.

The United Nations recorded 62 incidents, opens new tab of Jewish settlers vandalising water wells, pipelines, irrigation networks and other water-related infrastructure in the West Bank in the first six months of the year.

The Israeli military acknowledged it has received multiple reports of Israeli civilians intentionally causing damage to water infrastructure but that no suspects had been identified.

Among the targets have been a freshwater spring and a water distribution station in Ein Samiya, around 16 km (10 miles) northeast of Ramallah, serving around 20 nearby Palestinian villages and some city neighbourhoods.

At the summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping pressed his vision for a new global se-



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump meets with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the White House in Washington, D.C., U.S.

curity and economic order that prioritizes the "Global South," in a direct challenge to the U.S.

The U.S.-India relationship has strengthened in recent years, including during Trump's first term, given shared concerns about China's growing power, but Trump threatened the tariffs on India after it refused to stop buying Russian oil in defiance of his efforts to end Moscow's war in Ukraine.

In China, in an image designed to convey solidarity, Putin and Modi were shown holding hands as they walked jovially toward Xi

before the summit opened. The three men stood shoulder-to-shoulder, laughing and surrounded by interpreters.

Beijing has used the summit to mend ties with New Delhi. Modi, visiting China for the first time in seven years, and Xi agreed on Sunday their countries are development partners, not rivals, and discussed ways to improve trade.

The U.S. State Department and White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the meetings in China.

(Reuters)

Gifted Kosie to shine at SA show with MaWhoo

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI'S star female DJ Gifted Kosie, is gearing up to showcase her talents at the highly anticipated 'Spring Shandis 2025' event, sharing the stage with South African music sensation MaWhoo.

The event is scheduled for September 6, 2025, at the vibrant KaMabuza Bar Lounge in Nkomazi. Tickets for the event are currently available in Phase 2 at E100, with gate prices set at E120. VIP tickets, offering an exclusive experience, are priced at E250. This pricing structure aims to accommodate a diverse audience eager to witness performances by some of the region's most dynamic artists.

In an exclusive interview, Gifted Kosie expressed her excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to perform on an international platform. She highlighted the significance of such gigs in expanding her artistic horizons and connecting with a broader audience. "International gigs are so important to me because they build my confidence, leading me to be a more resilient DJ. This international exposure allows me to create a new audience and influences new artistic ideas. I hope to build a sustainable and lasting international presence," she shared.

Gifted Kosie's music journey is marked by her dedication to blending diverse sounds and rhythms, reflecting her Eswatini roots and global influences.

Her performances are known for their high energy and ability to engage audiences deeply, making her a standout figure in the regional music scene. Looking ahead to



▲ Gifted Kosie.

her performance at 'Spring Shandis 2025,' Gifted Kosie promised an unforgettable experience.

"On stage, I promise to deliver a high-energy, memorable experience that leaves

audiences with a great impression of the music and culture. Off stage, I will maintain professionalism, embodying the best qualities of the country's passion, resilience, and creativity," she affirmed.

Sol Phenduka to ignite Mlawula Campfire Festival 2025

THE Mlawula Campfire Festival is gearing up for its sixth spectacular edition.

Promising an unforgettable weekend of music, nature, and community spirit from September 26 to 28, 2025. Set within the breathtaking Mlawula Nature Reserve at the Siphiso Campsite, this festival has become a beloved annual event, drawing outdoor enthusiasts and families eager to immerse themselves in the beauty and tranquillity of Eswatini's wilderness.

A standout highlight for this year's festival is the much-anticipated appearance of South African sensation Sol Phenduka. Known widely as a dynamic DJ, producer, radio personality, and entrepreneur, he brings a multifaceted talent that resonates with diverse audiences. Notably, the event has also confirmed Eswatini's DJ Obsession and South African Supta.

The festival's unique charm lies in its seamless blend of adventure, entertainment, and cultural enrichment, all set against the stunning backdrop of the Mlawula Nature Reserve. This year, organisers have expanded the program to deepen the festival's engagement with nature and community, ensuring there is something for everyone.

Adventure seekers will relish the

invigorating hikes led by local experts through the reserve's lush landscapes. These guided treks offer a rare chance to explore the rich biodiversity of the area, from its vibrant flora to the diverse fauna that call the reserve home. Beyond physical experience, these hikes serve an educational purpose, raising awareness about conservation efforts vital to preserving this natural treasure.

For those who prefer a more relaxed pace, the festival offers yoga and aerobics sessions amidst the serene environment of the reserve. These wellness activities are designed to help participants unwind, recharge, and foster a deeper connection with the natural world around them. Cultural enthusiasts will find plenty to engage with through a variety of workshops and demonstrations. These sessions spotlight local crafts, traditional cuisine, and cultural practices, providing a platform for attendees to appreciate and participate in Eswatini's rich heritage.

Adding to the festival's vibrant entertainment lineup is a comedy night featuring some of Africa's most beloved comedians. The event will showcase the talents of Siyanda Maphumulo and Monkey Man, alongside Eswatini's stars Christian Dude, Bongiswa & Darren, and the dynamic duo Gogo & S'lwane.



▲ Sol Phenduka.



▲ Histo's 'Makoti Longeva' artcover.

Histo's 'Makoti Longeva' hits 80 000 views

ESWATINI'S music scene is witnessing a powerful new single from talented musician Histo, titled 'Makoti Longeva,' which has since reached over 80,000 views in a month.

The song resonates with listeners on multiple levels, exploring the complexities of marriage and cultural expectations in contemporary society. The track features contributions from fellow artists M Nation, Young Zesh, and DJ Citie.

In an exclusive interview, Histo shared the inspiration behind 'Makoti Longeva,' stating, "This song is a composition that emerged from my reflections on the changes we're seeing in today's generation, especially regarding marriage." He emphasised that the song is not drawn from personal experiences but rather from observations within his community and the stories he encounters.

"I imagined a situation where a man marries a woman, thinking she will be a pillar of the home, only to find that she struggles to adjust to the family's values," he explained. The song carries a profound cultural and emotional message that speaks directly to the heart of Eswatini's traditions. Histo elaborated, "In our African tradition, especially here in Eswatini, a wife is seen not only as a partner to her husband but also as someone who joins and respects the entire family."

Expectation

He pointed out the expectations placed on wives to embody dignity, humility, and maturity within the family structure. 'Makoti Longeva' aims to highlight the consequences of a shift in priorities, where some women may overlook their responsibilities at home, treating elders with disrespect and prioritising social outings over family obligations. "It's a reminder that respect for culture, for elders, and for the family structure is still important," he asserted.

The creative process behind 'Makoti Longeva' was one of intentionality and collaboration. Histo had a clear storyline in mind, which allowed the lyrics to flow naturally. "I wanted the lyrics to feel like a conversation, something people could relate to and talk about," he said. Partnering with artists like M Nation, Young Zesh, and DJ Citie was a strategic decision to enhance the song's emotional depth.

Musically, 'Makoti Longeva' blends Afro-pop with cultural elements and storytelling, creating a sound that is both traditional and modern. DJ Citie's production of the beat has been pivotal in bringing Histo's vision to life, establishing a rhythm and mood that complement the song's message.

INTERNATIONAL BREAKTHROUGH. . .

As 4 JerryP joins forces with Xowla Stallion

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

AS 4 JerryP, renowned for his hit single ‘Mlentengamunye,’ connected with South African record producer and artist Xowla Stallion of Nkabi Records.

This meeting, orchestrated by multi-platinum artist Sjava, heralds a promising new chapter for Eswatini’s burgeoning music industry and its rising star. Xowla Stallion arrived in Eswatini for back-to-back performances at two popular venues: Zhumiao Lounge in Pigs Peak on Saturday, August 30, 2025, and Scandza Bar in Siphofaneni on Sunday, August 31, 2025.

It was at Scandza Bar where the landmark moment unfolded.

Although As 4 JerryP was not originally scheduled to perform, Xowla invited him on stage during his set, delivering a surprise live rendition of Mlentengamunye that electrified the audience. Before introducing JerryP to the crowd, Xowla shared an



exciting update, revealing that he had just spoken with Sjava, who confirmed plans

for JerryP to travel to Johannesburg for an intensive five-day studio session.

This opportunity will see JerryP working closely with Sjava and his team, a testament to the confidence they have in his potential.

Xowla emphasised that Sjava and Nkabi Records are committed to nurturing JerryP’s talent, positioning him as one of the most promising voices to emerge from Eswatini.

The announcement was met with enthusiasm and optimism by fans and industry insiders alike.

Recognition

It signals not only a personal milestone for JerryP but also a broader recognition of Eswatini’s cultural and musical narratives on an international platform. The collaboration with Nkabi Records opens doors for cross-border creative exchange and elevates the Kingdom’s music scene to new heights.

“This is not just a milestone for JerryP, but for the whole Kingdom of Eswatini’s music industry.

His journey shows that our stories, our sound, and our talent are ready for the global stage,” the star said.

As 4 JerryP continues to cement his place as the biggest rising artist in Eswatini, these opportunities affirm his growing influence beyond the borders of the Kingdom.

D.General brings deep house vibes to Manzini

D.General, the acclaimed South African deep house producer and DJ is poised to electrify the Manzini music scene with a headline performance at the Brussels Lounge.

Scheduled for Sunday, September 7, 2025, the event is set to be an immersive journey into soulful rhythms and deep grooves, kicking off at 2 pm and continuing late into the night. Known for his distinctive fusion of deep house, soulful melodies, and Afro-house influences, D.General, has carved a niche in the electronic music landscape. His artistry is deeply rooted in jazz and gospel traditions, which seamlessly blend with contemporary deep house sounds.

This unique style has been showcased in his acclaimed releases such as the Strictly Underground EP and his collaborative projects with the duo Deep Xcape. D.General’s music resonates with emotional depth and warmth, a quality that has earned him a loyal following both locally and internationally. His work has been featured on prestigious labels including Sophisticado Records and Soul Candi, amplifying his reputation as a purveyor of soulful, groove-laden tracks that captivate audiences worldwide.

The Sunday Soul Lookout event at Brussels Lounge will not only spotlight D.General but also feature an impressive lineup of supporting artists. Vasco & De Dang, Mthizo, Crooks, Wicked, Fantasy, Bandora, Bhekzin, and Mafaka are set to complement the headliner’s performance, promising a diverse and dynamic musical experience for attendees. The event’s free entry further encourages a broad audience to engage with the vibrant local and regional music culture.

Brussels Lounge, known for its intimate atmosphere and commitment to showcasing quality live performances, provides the perfect venue for this celebration of deep house and soulful sounds. The event is expected to draw music enthusiasts from across Manzini and beyond, eager to experience the rich textures and compelling rhythms that define D.General’s style.



▲ D. General.

▲ Zee Nxumalo

Zee Nxumalo’s ‘Mamma’ gaining traction

ESWATINI-born singer and songwriter Zee Nxumalo has once again captured the hearts of music lovers worldwide with the release of her latest single, ‘Mamma.’

The track, which features South African artists Skillz and Skyes, is already making waves across digital platforms, amassing over a million views on YouTube alone within days of its release. The new single marks another milestone in Zee Nxumalo’s rapidly ascending career. Known for her soulful voice and infectious rhythms, Nxumalo has become a formidable presence in the South African and global music scenes.

‘Mamma’ is available on all major streaming services, including Spotify, Apple Music, and Deezer, allowing fans across the globe to experience the vibrant energy and emotional depth that Zee brings to her music. The collaboration with Skillz and Skyes adds a dynamic edge to the track.

Phenomenal

This release follows the phenomenal success of Zee Nxumalo’s previous hit, ‘Ngisakuthanda,’ featuring TBO. The single recently achieved triple platinum certification, having sold over 120,000 units. In addition to her solo achievements, Zee Nxumalo has also joined forces with fellow Eswatini-born global sensation Uncle Waffles for their first-ever studio collaboration. The partnership between these two powerhouse artists has excited fans and critics alike, promising fresh and innovative sounds that push the boundaries of contemporary African music.

Zee Nxumalo’s journey from her roots in Eswatini to becoming a celebrated “Jozi baby” in Johannesburg is a testament to her talent and determination. At just 21 years old, she has already made significant strides in the South African music industry. Her 2023 breakout single was ‘Pholile,’ which featured renowned artists Azana and Mlindo The Vocalist. Following ‘Pholile,’ Zee Nxumalo continued to build momentum with hit tracks like ‘Funk 55,’ ‘Shayimoto,’ and ‘Nguwe.’

Rihanna's 20-year journey:

From 'Music of the Sun' to global stardom



▲ Rihanna is officially celebrating two decades of music greatness, and she's taking a moment to reflect on the incredible journey that started with her debut album, *Music of the Sun*, released on August 29, 2005.

RIHANNA is officially celebrating two decades of music greatness, and she's taking a moment to reflect on the incredible journey that started with her debut album, *Music of the Sun*, released on August 29, 2005. In an emotional Instagram post over the weekend, the Barbadian superstar shared her gratitude with the people who have been part of her rise.

"Twenty years ago, I left my country, my culture, my food, and family to embark on a journey that started with the release of my very first body of music," she wrote.

She went on to thank her fans for being "the most loyal, die-hard" supporters, her hardworking team, her family, industry mentors, and, above all, God, for guiding her every step of the way. To mark the milestone, Rihanna dropped her "R20" merchandise collection that has her fans buzzing.

At the centre of the drop is "Rhenna," the stick-figure cartoon version of the singer that

originated from a fan meme and has since become her digital avatar.

The collection includes an all-black hoodie with the Rhenna figure and "20 Years With You" lettering, a layered tee featuring a black-and-white portrait shot by Dennis Leupold, and a vinyl box set that packs all eight of her studio albums.

Rihanna's career took off with her breakout single "Pon de Replay", but it was tracks like "Umbrella", "We Found Love", and "Diamonds" that cemented her status as one of the biggest artists of her generation. Known for constantly reinventing her sound while staying true to her roots, she's collected nine Grammys, billions of streams, and a legacy that goes far beyond the charts.

From island girl to global icon, Rihanna's impact on music, fashion, and culture is undeniable. She has built an empire that includes not just her chart-topping albums but also her successful ventures, such as Fenty Beauty and Savage X Fenty.

(Sunday World)



Leon Schuster films return to screens

FROM 'Music of the Sun' to global stardom Comedy legend Leon Schuster is back on Mzansi screens, and this time it is official.

MultiChoice has moved to silence speculation around the veteran filmmaker's work being "banned" from its platforms, confirming that his slapstick comedy classics are rolling out on Showmax.

In a statement, the pay-to-view broadcaster said: "MultiChoice can confirm that Leon Schuster films are not banned from its platforms. As a broadcaster, we review all content to ensure it aligns with set regulations. "Showmax is currently rolling out content from Leon Schuster's collection, with titles like *Sweet & Short*, *There's A Zulu on My Stoep*, *Your Country Needs You*, *Oh Schuks*, *I'm Gatvol*, and *Shucks! Pay Back the Money*, available from 28 August 2025."

The news comes after years of debate surrounding Schuster's films, some of which were criticised for their racial undertones and the use of blackface in earlier productions.

Pressure from fans

At the height of 2020's global Black Lives Matter movement, MultiChoice had temporarily pulled several Schuster movies from Showmax, citing concerns about offensive portrayals.

But fans never stopped demanding a return of the comedy king, whose pranks, hidden-camera antics, and uniquely South African humour made him a household name.

His box office hits like *There's A Zulu on My Stoep* and *Oh Schuks*, *I'm Gatvol* defined local comedy in the 1990s and 2000s, making Schuster into one of the country's most bankable filmmakers.

MultiChoice also banned *Mr Bones*, *Mr Bones 2: Back from the Past*, and *Mama Jack*. After review, only *Frank & Fearless*, Schuster's 2018 comedy, was temporarily restored.

At the time, Showmax emphasised that, while the movies were products of their time and created with positive intent, they had to strike a balance between sensitivity and their role as a unifying platform.

Industry insiders have said that the decision to reintroduce his films is part of Showmax's strategy to strengthen its local catalogue and tap into nostalgia.

"People want to laugh again, and Leon's work speaks to that old-school South African humour," one insider told Sunday World.

(Sunday World)

Kgomotso Ramano splits from husband months after lavish wedding

KGOMOTSO Ramano, a radiographer and lifestyle influencer, has shockingly confirmed the end of her marriage to husband Bonga, just months after their dreamy wedding that had social media buzzing with excitement.

Taking to her Instagram Stories, Kgomotso broke the news in a heartfelt statement, admitting that this separation was not something she ever imagined she would have to share with the public.

"After a lot of thought and being separated for a while now, we have reached a point where we are each moving forward with our lives independently," she wrote. Fairytale love story

The announcement comes as a shock to her loyal followers, who had watched her fairytale love story unfold online, from engagement bliss to the glamorous wedding day.

However, Kgomotso made it clear that the journey has not been easy and that her priority is now healing, peace, and the well-being of her children.

"This is a deeply personal transition, and I am choosing to focus on my healing, my peace, my future, and the well-being of my children above all else," she explained.

Without disclosing the details of the split, she appealed for privacy and respect during this difficult time, firmly stating that she would not be entertaining speculation or assumptions.

"My priority remains creating stability and love for my children and, where possible, working towards a respectful co-parenting relationship that puts them first," she said.

Grateful for the support

Her message was also filled with gratitude



▲ Kgomotso Ramano, a radiographer and lifestyle influencer, has shockingly confirmed the end of her marriage to husband Bonga, just months after their dreamy wedding that had social media buzzing with excitement.

to those who have supported her quietly behind the scenes.

"Thank you to everyone who has quietly supported me, prayed for me, or extended kindness during this season. It means more than you know," Kgomotso added.

The couple, who only tied the knot a few months ago, had become social media's picture of love and commitment.

The couple travelled to Bali for their honeymoon, which Kgomotso revealed cost R 180,000.

News of their split has left fans both heartbroken and sympathetic, with many flooding her page with messages of encouragement.

(Sunday World)



MOST cold medications contain stimulants, which, if taken alongside caffeine, can lead to heightened side effects.

It's recommended that you avoid caffeine if you're taking any medications for a cold or flu.

Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant commonly found in beverages such as coffee, tea, energy drinks, and some sodas. When mixed with other stimulants, such as cold and flu medications, it can lead to increased side effects, such as restlessness, headaches, and nausea.

Learn more about the interactions between caffeine and cold medications, alternative options, and when you should speak with a doctor.

Can caffeine interact with cold medicine?

Cold medications contain ingredients such as pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine, which can help to reduce nasal congestion and allow you to breathe more easily.

However, these ingredients are also active stimulants, which can affect your central nervous system and lead to side effects such as:

- ▶ feeling shaky or nervous
- ▶ restlessness
- ▶ nausea
- ▶ dry mouth
- ▶ difficulty sleeping

Other stimulants, such as caffeine, can affect the way a drug is absorbed and processed in the body. This can make the medication itself less efficient, and any side effects may become heightened.

For example, feeling nervous or restless may grow into feelings of anxiety and jitteriness.

What are the risks of drinking caffeine with cold medicine?

In some cases, drinking large amounts of caffeine with medications can lead to serious complications such as:

- ▶ high blood pressure
- ▶ dehydration
- ▶ heart palpitations
- ▶ heart attack or stroke
- ▶ increased heart rate

Additionally, some pain relievers may already contain caffeine, and if consumed with a beverage such as coffee, can increase the risk of further complications.

How long should you wait to drink caffeine after taking cold medicine?

There's no set time as to when you can resume drinking caffeine after taking your medication. Some healthcare professionals recommend waiting at least 1 hour after you take your medication. This can help to limit any negative interactions and ensure the drug can work effectively.

A healthcare professional can help you determine the best time to take your medication and if and when it's safe to also consume caffeine.

Alternative options to caffeine

If you have a cold or flu, try swapping out your morning coffee for beverages such as noncaffeinated herbal teas. While it may not have the same energy kick, it can provide additional nutrients that can help to soothe and manage cold symptoms.



Can you drink caffeine with cold medicine?

● Most cold medications contain stimulants, which, if taken alongside caffeine, can affect the way a drug is absorbed and processed in the body.

When to see a doctor

If you have taken cold or flu medication and experience any of the following side effects, it's important to seek immediate medical support:

- ▶ heart palpitations that are not stopping or keep coming back
- ▶ a high temperature (above 100.4 °F or 38°C)
- ▶ skin discoloration or the appearance of pustules (pus-filled bumps)
- ▶ sudden nausea or vomiting

If you do experience any of the above symptoms, it's important to stop taking the medication right away.

Can you take cold medicine and caffeine?

Coffee can cause negative interactions, such as heightened anxiety and nausea, when taken with cold medications, and so it should be avoided.

How long after taking medicine can I drink coffee?

There's no set time as to when you can resume drinking caffeine after taking your medication. A healthcare professional can help you determine the best time to take your medication and if and when it is safe to also consume caffeine.

The bottom line

Most cold medications contain stimulants, which, if taken alongside caffeine, can affect the way a drug is absorbed and processed in the body.

This can mean the medication itself may be less efficient, and any side effects may become heightened. For example, feeling nervous or restless may grow into feelings of anxiety and jitteriness.

It's recommended that you avoid caffeine if you're taking any medications for a cold or flu.

A healthcare professional can help you determine the best time to take your medication and if and when it's safe to consume caffeine.

Healthline

● If you have a cold or flu, try swapping out your morning coffee for beverages such as noncaffeinated herbal teas. While it may not have the same energy kick, it can provide additional nutrients that can help to soothe and manage cold symptoms.



VEGETABLES like spinach, kale, and onions can support your heart health.

You can eat more of these vegetables through meal planning and making vegetables more visible in your fridge.

Vegetables play a key role in supporting heart health. The American Heart Association recommends that adults consume at least 2 1/2 cups of vegetables per day.

However, it can be challenging to reach this recommended intake, especially if you aren't used to eating a lot of vegetables. Keep reading to learn more about vegetables that promote heart health, as well as how to incorporate more of them into your diet.

Which vegetables should I be eating?

All vegetables can support heart health in some capacity. However, some vegetables may be more beneficial than others. A 2018 study found that certain vegetables may have more heart health benefits, including:

- ▶ onions
- ▶ garlic
- ▶ cruciferous vegetables
- ▶ leafy greens

Many cruciferous vegetables are rich in nutrients such as vitamin K and folate. Some examples of cruciferous vegetables include:

- ▶ cauliflower
- ▶ brussels sprouts
- ▶ broccoli
- ▶ bok choy

Leafy greens are high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Examples of leafy greens include:

- ▶ collard greens
- ▶ spinach
- ▶ beet greens
- ▶ watercress
- ▶ romaine lettuce
- ▶ swiss chard
- ▶ endive
- ▶ turnip greens

Vegetables like kale, cabbage, and arugula fall under both the cruciferous and leafy green categories.

Canned and frozen vegetables

It's perfectly O.K. to consume canned or frozen vegetables, as all forms of vegetables count towards your intake. They are convenient and keep for a long time.

However, keep in mind that some canned vegetables may contain added sugars or sodium to help preserve them in the can. Before you use vegetables from a can, consider rinsing them in water to remove this excess sugar and salt. Read the nutrition labels on canned vegetables to choose options with the lowest sodium and added sugar content. You should also try to buy plain frozen vegetables. Some frozen vegetables come mixed in sauces, which are often a hidden source of sodium and added sugar.

Tips to eat more vegetables

Here are a few ways you can incorporate more vegetables into your diet for a healthier heart.

Meal plan

Planning your meals in advance can help you meet your vegetable intake by ensuring every meal contributes to it. And when you go to the grocery store, you can get everything you need for the week. Instead

How to eat more vegetables for a healthy heart



of throwing something together last-second with what you happen to have on hand — or having to make another grocery run — you will have all of the ingredients you need to create vegetable-rich meals.

Meal examples

- ▶ Shiritaki noodles with broccoli-almond pesto
- ▶ Stuffed eggplant with feta & spinach salad
- ▶ Keto chili glazed salmon with avocado kale salad
- ▶ Warm kale and pancetta salad with a fried egg
- ▶ Snack on vegetables
- If you find yourself reaching for a bag of chips in between meals, consider planning out snacks that incorporate vegetables.
 - ▶ Snack ideas
 - ▶ Classic homemade guacamole with celery sticks
 - ▶ Zucchini pizza bites
 - ▶ Green smoothie with spinach, cucumber, and pineapple
 - ▶ Carrot ginger smoothie

Make vegetables visible

If you're buying vegetables but find that they go bad before you get to them, switching some things around in your fridge may help prevent this. Instead of storing them in the produce drawer, try moving vegetables to eye level or putting them in the door of your fridge. Then, every time you open the fridge, you will remember that you have them.

The downside of this is that your produce may spoil faster outside of the produce drawers, which can help them stay fresher for longer. An alternative to changing the location of your vegetables is writing down the vegetables you have on a magnetic white board and attaching it to your fridge.

Eat vegetables in season

Sopme vegetables are available at all times of the year, but you may find that they are the tastiest while they are in season. They may even be more nutritious compared to when they are out of season. Try varying your meals by incorporating new vegetables every season. Having something new and delicious

to look forward to can keep you motivated to reach your vegetable intake goal.

Take it slow

While vegetables like leafy greens and onions may have more heart health benefits than others, if you aren't used to eating enough vegetables in general — or dislike certain ones — it's O.K. to stick to the ones you like at first. Eating the vegetables you enjoy may increase the likelihood that you meet the recommended intake.

Once you are consistently meeting the recommended intake, you can branch out.

Takeaway

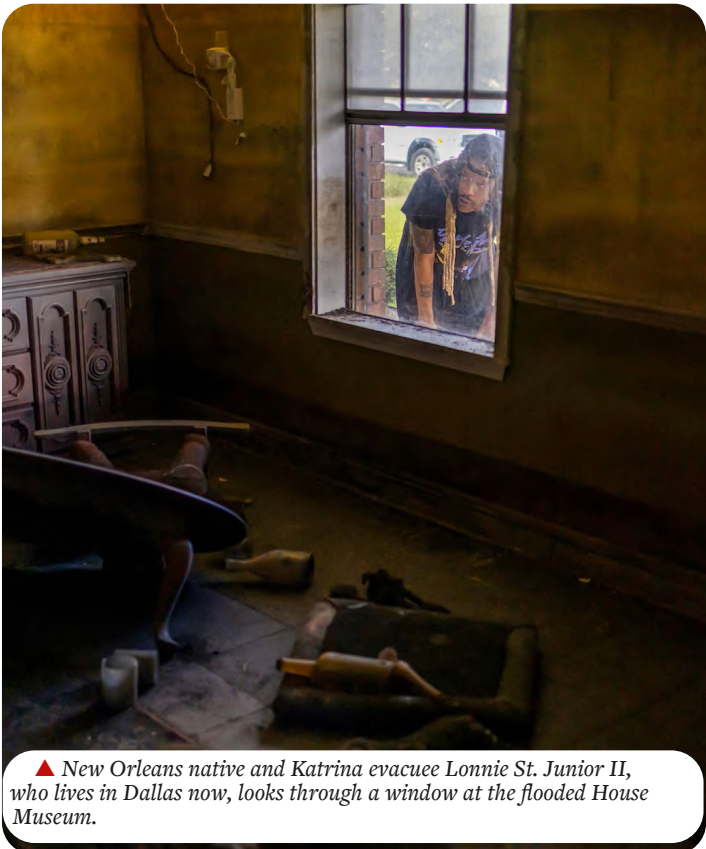
While all vegetables can support your heart health in some way, vegetables such as onions, kale, spinach, and garlic may provide additional benefits. You can incorporate more heart-healthy vegetables in your diet through meal planning, planning snacks, and rearranging your fridge to make vegetables more visible.

Healthline

News in pictures



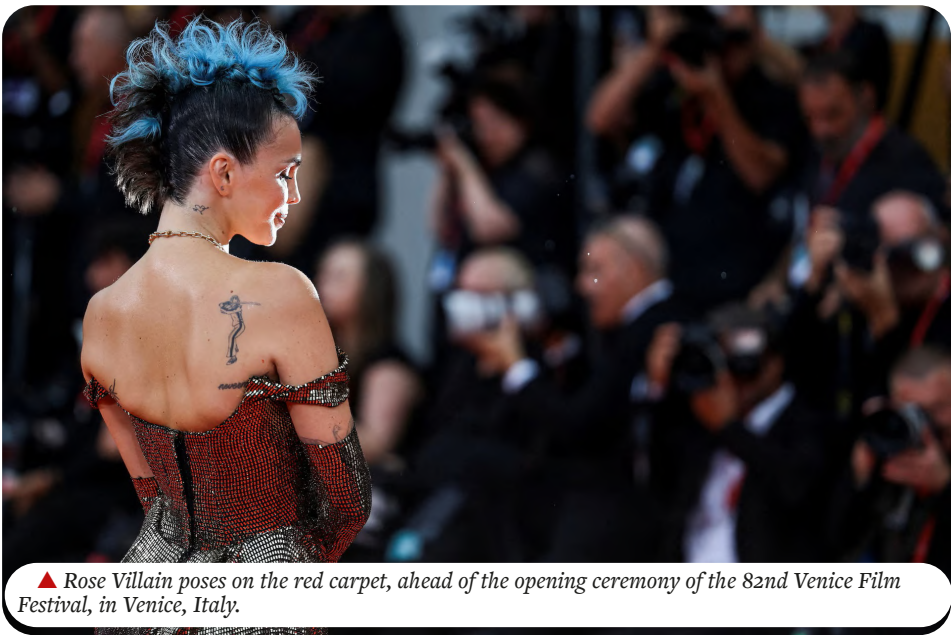
▲ People visit a beauty salon, which was damaged in the morning during a Russian missile and drone strike, as shattered glass lies outside the window, in Kyiv, Ukraine



▲ New Orleans native and Katrina evacuee Lonnie St. Junior II, who lives in Dallas now, looks through a window at the flooded House Museum.



▲ A grape picker unloads harvested grapes into a container at the Domaine de La Pepiere vineyard during the Muscadet wine harvest in Maisdon-sur-Sevres near Nantes, France.



▲ Rose Villain poses on the red carpet, ahead of the opening ceremony of the 82nd Venice Film Festival, in Venice, Italy.



▲ Corgi dogs run during the Corgi Race festival in Vilnius, Lithuania.

New Italy coach Gattuso ‘not afraid’ before first matches in charge

GENNARO Gattuso insisted Monday he had no fear despite feeling “wound up like a spring” before his first games as Italy head coach in upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Estonia and Israel.

Italy are at risk of missing out on a third consecutive World Cup after a troubled start to their qualifying campaign which has left them nine points behind Group I leaders Norway and cost his predecessor Luciano Spalletti his job.

“I’m wound up like a spring,” Gattuso told reporters.

“I have been since the first day. I also feel the weight of responsibility because I wore this jersey myself...

“One thing is certain, I’m not afraid.”

Gattuso took over in June from Spalletti, who was dismissed after Italy’s 3-0 defeat in Oslo in their opening qualifier.

Italy are third in Group I with three points, albeit with two games in hand on Norway.

Israel sit in second place, which provides a play-off spot, three points above Italy having played one game more.

The Azzurri missed out on the last two World Cups with play-off defeats.

“Let’s take it one match at a time



▲ Gennaro Gattuso.

and think about doing things right. Our history shows that we haven’t won many matches with a cascade of goals,” continued the former AC Milan player.

“We must take to the pitch with authority and pride, but we can’t just focus on scoring as many goals as possible.”

Gattuso, who has coached several clubs including AC Milan and Napoli since retiring as a player in 2013.

His last job was as boss of Croatian club Hajduk Split.

Italy host Estonia in Bergamo on Friday and play Israel in Debrecen three days later.

(Supersport)

Stella looks forward to Norris showing fighting spirit

MCLAREN team boss Andrea Stella expects Lando Norris to show his fighting spirit after the blow of retirement in Sunday’s Dutch Grand Prix.

The Briton is now 34 points behind Australian teammate Oscar Piastri in their Formula One title battle with nine rounds remaining. He said on Sunday that he would be going full-on to try and win every race.

“When he says he’s going to be full commitment... it just means that if anything he will try to extract out of himself even more from his incredible potential,” Stella told reporters.

“We know that his talent is immense and I’m sure this situation in the championship will give him extra motivation to try and extract it.”

Piastri has won seven of the 15 grands prix so far in 2025 with Norris on five.

Red Bull’s four-time world champion Max Verstappen has won twice, and was second in his home race at Zandvoort on Sunday, with Mercedes’ George Russell triumphant in Canada last June.

McLaren will be chasing a sixth win in a row at this weekend’s Italian Grand Prix, where last year Norris took pole and fastest lap yet finished third with Piastri second behind Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc.

Norris was second at Monza in 2021 and neither he nor Piastri have won there.

Stella said McLaren would remain neutral and continue to allow their



▲ McLaren team boss Andrea Stella.

drivers to race freely.

“We will give maximum support to make sure that he stays in the fighting spirit,” he added of Norris. “I think this will come very naturally and if anything we may see even a better version of Lando.

“Because now is the time to extract, if there is anything more, even

more out of his potential.

“So I look forward to seeing Lando in the coming races. I’m sure this is going to be a great spectacle for Formula One and if anything its going to make the competition with Oscar even more interesting.”

(Supersport)

Australia prop Slipper backs O’Connor to rebound from kicking issues

AUSTRALIA prop James Slipper has backed flyhalf James O’Connor to move past his goal-kicking struggles against South Africa, saying the playmaker has the experience to bounce back for Saturday’s Rugby Championship clash with Argentina.

O’Connor missed three shots off the tee late in the 30-22 defeat in Cape Town as the Wallabies suffered their first loss to sit second on the table behind New Zealand after two rounds.

“Look, we all have our moments, and I know ‘JOC’ will be better for it,” Slipper told reporters on Monday.

“He’s been around long enough to know how to deal with setbacks, and we’ve got full confidence in him heading into the Argentina game.”

The Wallabies meet the Pumas at Townsville a year on from conceding an Australian record total of points in their 67-27 humiliation by the South Americans in Santa Fe.

Argentina, meanwhile, arrive in form after claiming their first home win over the All Blacks in Buenos Aires.

The Wallabies squad have been hit with a slew of injuries but Slipper and fellow prop Allan Alaalatoa are back in the mix.

Slipper missed the second test against the Springboks after a head knock in the Wallabies’ upset of the South Africans at Ellis Park. “For us, history is obviously a big thing. There’s a big thing made about Eden Park and so on. For us, no, it’s a nervous week. We’re confident that we can do well. But I guess in New Zealand we’ll be under the pressure that I can see that people put on them.

“We’re experiencing very much the same. We are two teams that have a lot of respect for each other. But then also internally, I think both teams believe they can win the match.”

Erasmus said the only difference in playing in Auckland was the Boks were in front of All Black fans, otherwise the contest would be the same.

“We’re just away from our South African supporters, which we love to be in front of. So, there’s a couple of supporters here. In these two weeks the only difference is there’s less South African supporters here.

“I’ve been touring here since 1994 in New Zealand as a player. And it’s never easy here. I don’t think I won as a player here. We’ve won one and drawn one since I’ve been involved in the coaching team. So it’s always a tough and nerve-wracking week. And I guess it’s the same for New Zealand.”

The Boks will name their side for the clash on Thursday.

Alaalatoa has been out of action with a shoulder problem since the British & Irish Lions series, and Slipper was thrilled to have his 83-cap teammate back in the setup ahead of the crunch game in Queensland.

“He’s such a calming presence, a real leader in our team. A bit of a father figure, to be honest,” he said.

“Just having him around the squad again lifts everyone.

“Argentina are always physical, always up for a battle, so having Allan’s presence up front is massive for us.”

(Supersport)



▲ James O’Connor.

Leverkusen sack Erik Ten Hag after two league matches

BAYER Leverkusen have sacked manager Erik Ten Hag after just two Bundesliga matches in charge, the club announced on Monday.

Fired by Manchester United last October, Ten Hag joined Leverkusen as the successor to Xabi Alonso, who moved to Real Madrid.

“This decision was not easy for us. Nobody wanted to take this step,” sporting director Simon Rolfes said in a statement.

“The past few weeks have shown that the steps to build a new and successful team have not been effective,” Rolfes said.

Club CEO Fernando Carro said the decision was “painful, but necessary”.

The sacking means the 55-year-old Dutchman now has the unwanted record of being the coach to be fired so early into a Bundesliga season, breaking the previous mark of five matches.

Named United manager in July 2022, Ten Hag won the FA and League Cups but was let go after a run of just one win in eight matches midway through the 2024-25 season, the club’s worst start to a campaign in the Premier League era.

Taking over after the most successful period in Leverkusen’s history, with an unbeaten league and cup double in 2023-24 including the first Bundesliga title in the club’s 120-year history, Ten Hag was tasked with overseeing a dramatic rebuild.

Leverkusen lost several core members of the team this summer,



▲ Bayer Leverkusen have sacked manager Erik Ten Hag.

including Florian Wirtz, Granit Xhaka, Jonathan Tah, Jeremie Frimpong, Amine Adli and Lukas Hradecky.

The club did not name a replacement for Ten Hag, saying the “training work would be taken over by the assistant coaching staff for the time being”.

Named Leverkusen manager on July 1, Ten Hag’s first match in charge was a 5-1 drubbing by Flamengo’s under-20s team in a friendly in Brazil. After a 4-0 win over fourth-tier Sonnenhof Grossaspach in their German Cup opener, Leverkusen claimed one point from their first two Bundesliga fixtures.

Leverkusen let a one-goal lead slip to lose 2-1 at home to Hoffenheim

and on Saturday conceded two late goals against a 10-man Werder Bremen to draw 3-3, having led 2-0 and 3-1.

On Sunday, German outlets Bild and Kicker both reported Ten Hag was facing the sack, despite his short tenure at the club.

Ten Hag was tasked with bedding in more than a dozen new signings ahead of this season, including several young players.

The three most expensive signings in the club’s history – Malik Tillmann, Jarell Quansah and Eliesse Ben Seghir – all arrived this summer, for a combined cost of €102 million (\$120 million) plus bonuses.

(Supersport)

Mercedes have 100 percent belief in Antonelli, says Wolff

MERCEDES have expressed full support for Kimi Antonelli after the teenaged Italian Formula One rookie sent Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc crashing out of Sunday’s Dutch Grand Prix. Team boss Toto Wolff said it was always going to be a learning year, a rollercoaster of brilliance and hair-tearing frustration, and the Zandvoort weekend provided a good example.

Antonelli, who has just turned 19, collided with Leclerc after both pitted and the Italian tried to overtake.

Race stewards handed out a 10 second penalty for causing the collision, and another five seconds for speeding in the

pitlane, dropping Antonelli to 16th.

“We want to have a driver that has speed, that is fast, that learns, that scores the points,” Wolff told reporters. “But all the big ones make mistakes.

“Kimi, an 18-year-old thrown in this mammoth of a team representing Mercedes, he’s going to make mistakes – hopefully fewer mistakes next year and score bigger points. But my 100 per cent belief is in him on the long-term.”

Wolff said he had spoken to Antonelli after the race and “you just want to hug him, cuddle him, because he has that talent, the raw speed that is in him, and he copes well.”

(Supersport)



▲ Kimi Antonelli.

Wembley Tennis Club secures national title

WEMBLEY Tennis Club from the Eastern Cape emerged triumphant at the national finals of the American Express Clubs Championship, held at Sun City Resort in the North West on Sunday, 31 August.

Their victory marks a historic milestone, as they became the first club from the Eastern Cape to win the championship.

After securing wins in both of their opening-round matches, Wembley advanced to the playoffs where they defeated North West University and Bellevue Tennis Club from KwaZulu-Natal.

Bellevue claimed the runner-up position after a strong showing throughout the tournament.

Wembley Tennis Club was awarded R32 000 in prize money for their championship win, while Bellevue earned R15 000 for finishing second.

Representing the host province, North West University clinched third place by defeating Camps Bay Tennis Club from Cape Town in the playoff.

A total of 12 clubs competed in the national finals, including the winners of the provincial qualifying tournaments and three wildcard entries. Reflecting on the success of the nationwide campaign,

Tennis South Africa General Manager Anthony Moruthane said: “Congratulations to all the teams that competed at the American Express Clubs Championship finals, and to Wembley Tennis Club for winning the overall title.



▲ Wembley Tennis Club.

This is the first time a team from the Eastern Cape has won the national title. The level of competition we have seen – not only at the

finals but throughout the provincial tournaments – has been superb. It’s encouraging to witness the depth and quality of talent in

South African tennis. The sport is clearly in a good space, and the future looks bright.”

(Supersport)

8BET TRADE FAIR CUP QUARTER-FINALS PREVIEWS:

Stories by Chris Dlamini

Insingizi take on Chiefs

THE bigger they come, the harder they fall. This is just one way to sum up the second edition of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025/26.

Big teams fell over the weekend where two triple-header fixtures were witnessed on Saturday and Sunday. Out are the defending champions Young Buffaloes, capital city giants Mbabane Highlanders AM FC and hub giants Manzini Wanderers.

Buffaloes crashed out in penalties to just promoted Malanti Chiefs, while Highlanders and Wanderers crashed to Ezulwini United (The Stingers) and Green Mamba respectively with 2-0 margins. Ahead of the first quarterfinals, Mbabane Swallows was due to face Manzini Sea Birds at 7.30pm, while Royal Leopard had a date with elite debutants Amawele at 5pm. Will more giants fall? Unfortunately, this article was written way before those fixtures. Let us get into tonight's fixtures.

Can Malanti slay Nsingizini in quarters?

Nsingizini vs. Malanti Chiefs
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025
Kick-off: 5pm

Malanti Chiefs are not new to stringing surprises in knockouts. The gold and black outfit is back in the elite league and they marked that with an upset in the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup. They stunned the defending champions Young Buffaloes when they won in penalties.

Against Nsingizini Hotspurs who edged out elite debutants Tambankulu Celtics in the last 16, Malanti will aim to be winners as they know it's possible. They won the now defunct EswatiniBank Cup at some point, bringing down gigantic rivals and went on to play in the CAF Confederation Cup, so they have the experience for knockouts. It sure seems set to be an interesting quarter-finals match and one that can go anywhere. Either side looks capable of snatching a win and go on to the semis.

The ultimate goal is to get to the final, win it and be E630 000 richer, which just gives you a good financial boost ahead of what appears to be a very long and challenging football season. Senior players like striker Sandile Hlatjwako will be there to guide the team up front. His versatility is that he can also help defensively when he must and his height could prove a big threat to Insingizi



▲ Kwenzokuhle Khumalo Ezulwini United.

Yezulu if they allow as many crosses as possible to reach him in their danger zone.

While Insingizi must keep watch on Hlatshwako, Malanti will also have to deal with the quality their TotalEnergies CAF Champions League-bound rivals have. Their forward, Sambulo 'Masoso' Simelane has already scored against Tambankulu Celtics and will again be out to cause havoc in this match. May the best team win. It's the first time these two face off.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

- ▶ Nsingizini Hotspurs
- ▶ Sambulo 'Masoso' Simelane (Striker)
- ▶ Thando Langa (Midfielder-cum-defender)
- ▶ Malanti Chiefs
- ▶ Sandile Hlatjwako (Striker)
- ▶ Sandile Mazibuko (Striker)

Stingers go for Ubombo Sugar FC

Ezulwini United vs. Ubombo Sugar FC
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025
Kick-off: 7.30pm

Naturally, bees will always rush for a taste of sweet but can Ezulwini United live up to that - the team is formerly known as Tinyosi (Bees) hence they are called The Stingers? They have already stung giants Mbabane Highlanders AM and now have sugar belt outfit Ubombo Sugar FC to face in the quarter-finals of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup. The two sides will be doing battle for a spot in the semi-finals. It has to be mentioned that Ezulwini had a good Ingwenyama Cup run last season and that should be a point of in-

... As Stingers in Ubombo Sugar face-off



▲ Ubombo Sugar FC players first XI! during their recent match.



▲ Malanti Chiefs players react during the penalties

spiration for them to get past the quarter-finals stage. However, nothing will come on a silver platter as Ubombo, formerly Illovo, is also aiming for a win. It is a tough fixture to predict but judging by last season's league results, Ezulwini remain favourites to advance.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

- Ezulwini United
- ▶ Musa Dlamini (Striker)
 - ▶ Emmanuel Dufia (Winger)
 - ▶ Ubombo Sugar FC
 - ▶ Melusi 'Vardy' Thwala (Striker)
 - ▶ Njabulo Dlamini (Midfielder)

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

- ▶ Last season
- ▶ (09/02/25)
- ▶ Ubombo Sugar FC 0-3 Ezulwini United
- ▶ (22/09/25)
- ▶ Ezulwini United 1-0 Ubombo Sugar FC



▲ Nsingizini's Sambulo Simelane.

Over E5k for Mvutjini Super 8 Teams KO

THE Independence Day weekend will bring over E5 000 joy to winning teams in the Mvutjini Pool Room Super 8 Teams Pool Knockout Tournament.

A prize package of E5 500 is set aside for the eight teams invited to battle on the country's Independence Day on September 6. This will be in Ezulwini, at Mvutjini Pool Room, adjacent to Somnjalose High School. The champions will earn E2 000 plus gold medals and trophy.

The runner-up stand to take home E1 500 and silver medals while it will be E1 000

apiece for the semi-finalists.

Each team is expected to pay E500 joining fee through renowned former national team star Sithembiso 'Dodge' Matsebula and Msandi at 7608 0305 and 7651 5301. Meanwhile, the invited teams are Martins, Billiards, Magesi, Seven Secrets, Game Den, Mbabane Pool Club, Mvutjini and Bel-Air.

Prizes List:

1. E2 000+Trophy+Gold Medals
2. E1 500+Silver Medals
3. E1 000
4. E1 000



▲ The Independence Day weekend will bring over E5 000 joy to winning teams in the Mvutjini Pool Room Super 8 Teams Pool Knockout Tournament.

We want to make the nation proud — Loga



▲Dignitaries with Sihlangu players during the farewell function for the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

SIHLANGU head coach Zdravko Logarusic says they want to make the nations proud during the back-to-back 2026 FIFA World cup qualifiers.

The Croatian mentor said this during the squad farewell function held at EFA Technical Centre on Monday.

“We are ready for the clash, and we want to make the nation proud during the assignment. We have the necessary preparations for the match with the technical bench,” he said.

The squad captain, Junior Magagula, said they are ready for the assignment.

“We are looking forward to the match and will fight for maximum points in both matches. We have extensive preparations for the two matches and appreciate the support of the Eswatini Football Association throughout the camp,” he said.

Currently, the senior national side is at the bottom of Group D in the qualifiers, having earned just two points from their previous



▲Sihlangu head coach Zdravko Logarusic following proceedings.

Chippa United striker Justice Figareido joined the team in Johannesburg, while the duo of Alakhe Mdluli and Mthobisi Zwane were dropped from the squad.



▲Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Under Secretary Mzwandile Mthethwa represented Minister Bongani Nzima at the event.

Go and make us proud — Ministry of Sports tells Sihlangu

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE government has implored Sihlangu to hoist the country’s flag during the 2025 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Cameroon and Libya.

This was revealed by Under Secretary Mzwandile Mthethwa during the squad farewell function held on Monday.

Mthethwa represented Minister of Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs Mzwandile Mthethwa, during the event.

“We want positive results, as you will be representing the country during the assignment, and we believe that you can do the job on foreign soil. You should be in your best behaviour during the assignments as you will be representing the nation,” he said.

Eswatini Football Association President Peter ‘Samora’ Simelane urged the squad to grind out positive results.

“It’s time for the national team to start getting positive results so that we can align with His Majesty King Mswati III call to become competitive during major assignments such as the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). We strongly believe that you will perform well during the two matches,” he said.

Simelane also thanked the Government

for its continued support towards football development in the country.

“We are grateful for Government support towards football programs in the country, such as the refurbishment of the Somhlolo National Stadium. This has helped to bring back international football on home soil as we will host the last match at home and our CAF interclub competitions representatives will use the venue for their respective assignments,” he said.

- Sihlangu squad:**
Simanga Masangane
Mzwandile Mabelesa
Mlamuli Makhanya
Gift Gamedze
Junior Magagula
Ayanda Kunene (All Royal Leopard)
Bongwa ‘Owa’ Matsebula
Innocent ‘Makhehleni’ Dlamini
Siphosethu Mabilisa (All Young Buffaloes)
Mxolisi Manana (Green Mamba)
Newman Philiso (Mbabane Swallows)
Nkosingiphile Shongwe
Khanyakwezwe Shabalala
Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini
Kwakhe Thwala
Thubelihle Mavuso (All Nsingizini Hotspurs)
Mayibongwe Mabuza
Philani Mkhonto
Joseph Gibonga (All Manzini Sea Birds)
Justice Figareido (Chippa United, SA)

By Chris Dlamini

SHE is a tough lady who can take and inflict pain.

That is Eswatini’s Oyama Kyokushinkai-kan Karate Eswatini (OKKE) national open category champion, Nelly Gama. She just cannot stop hoisting the country’s flag internationally as she has done it again.

Gama, and her Dojo mates Mpendulo Maqonga and Majaha Mkhulisi competed in the Shihan Sabela Memorial IKO Matsushima Tournament on Saturday in Durban, South Africa (SA). However, she was the only podium finisher. Gama took the fourth spot and brought back home one of the trophies at stake.

Her hard kicks, punches and never-say-die spirit took her through amid five fights for the first time in an international tournament.

Nelly kicks to 4th in SA karate tourney

“It was so tough. I’d never gone five fights before, but I am happy with my performance and to finish fourth is an achievement. I fought very tough opponents,” she said.

Gama recently took first prize in a Gauteng Provincial Tournament where she was the champion in her open weight division. Meanwhile, Maqonga and Mkhulisi did not make it as far as her. However, they still had a good Tournament and can take the experience back to their team and upcoming tournaments like the STANLIB Champ of Champs.

OKKE Secretary Sensei Musa Ginindza also confirmed the trio travelled and represented the country. He congratulated Gama for her second international trophy in just a space of about two months.



▲Oyama female star Nelly Gama.

8BET TRADE FAIR CUP LAST 16:

‘Birds’ swallowed

By Chris Dlamini

M. Swallows.....@ 1, Nhlanhla 64th Sea Birds.....@ 1, Muzi 72nd

ANOTHER day, another giant falls. Capital city giants Mbabane Swallows followed other big guns on Monday night when they bowed out of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup last 16. Swallows became the fourth giant to lose in the second edition of the knockout under the 8Bet’s E2.5 million package. Also out are last year’s champions Young Buffaloes, capital city giants Mbabane Highlanders, and hub giants Manzini Wanderers. Swallows lost to resilient minnows Manzini Sea Birds in the dreaded penalty shootout. The match ended 1-all in regulation time before Sinethemba Dlamini decided it in sudden-death penalties. He scored to give Sea Birds the win, setting up a date with hub rivals and last season’s runners-up Moneni Pirates on Wednesday in the quarterfinals. Both teams had dismally failed in the opening shootout, with only the Swallows’ goalkeeper Sandanezwe Mathabela and the Sea Birds midfielder Mlandvo Tsabedze. The red and white side then missed their first sudden death penalty while Sea Birds made no mistake but decided the match. In the end, Sea Birds won 2-1 after sudden death penalties.



▲ Mbabane Swallows FC.

FIRST 8BET TRADE FAIR CUP DERBY NEXT: Leopard earns ‘Thikithi’ to Gr. Mamba clash

By Chris Dlamini

IT’S a crash game. That is the nature of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup as the 2025/26 edition goes on at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini. It does not matter the size of the team - big or small, they just crash out of the second edition. Police outfit Royal Leopard was not as unfortunate as other giants like Mbabane Highlanders, Manzini Wanderers and Young Buffaloes who all fell to their rivals in the last 16. Leopard took on elite debutants Amawele from Msunduzi, Mbabane on Monday. Experience did it for Leopard who dominated a sometimes promising Amawele. The quality between the two sides also showed. However, it was not until the second half, right at the start of it that Ingwe Mabalabala pounced, breaking the deadlock through forward Thokozani ‘Thikithi’ Dlamini. It was not long before Amawele made it 1-1 with a great counter and flawless passing for former Mbabane Highlanders winger Wandile Ntshakala to calmly slot it home from close range. However, Leopard again quickly took the lead via the boot of Thikithi, who netted the first brace of this year’s edition. He finished his brace within four minutes. He was on target in the 46th and 50th



▲ Royal Leopard FC.

before his teammate Thembisa Shabangu sealed their win with a third in the final 10 minutes. It will now be Leopard against Green Mamba in the quarter-finals on Wednesday at 5pm. The two security services sides will clash in the first fixture of the quarter-finals’ second phase. Meanwhile, Leopard will again play the match without six regulars who travelled with the national team Sihlangu Semnikati to Cameroon and Libya on Monday. The police outfit has, however, added former Mbabane Swallows star forward Mike Mohammed from Ghana. Mohammed was introduced at the start of the second half against Amawele but the former South Africa’s Maritzburg United among others in the Premier Soccer League did not manage a goal. He and his teammates will lead Leopard against a Green Mamba side that has all its stars. Green Mamba beat Manzini Wanderers in the last 16.



▲ Royal Leopard Coach Edwin Matsebula.

Clash against Green Mamba a tough one – Edwin

By Chris Dlamini

ROYAL Leopard head coach Edwin Matsebula is aware his next rival is no child’s play - Green Mamba it is! They will meet their star-studded rivals in the quarterfinals of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025/26 on Wednesday at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini. This is after Leopard outfoxed elite debutants Amawele FC with a 3-1 margin in the last 16 on Monday at the same venue where the E2.5 million sponsored knockout is underway from August 30 to September 7. “It’s a tough one. Green Mamba has all its players when we are missing six. This makes it very tough for us, but we’ll prepare for them,” said Matsebula in his post-match reaction. On the 3-1 win over Amawele, he said they had to change their attitude in the second half or risk losing the match. “We didn’t do well in the first half and Amawele showed they were here to compete. I had to tell my players to change their attitude, or they will lose the game,” said Matsebula. He said he was quite happy with how the players reacted as they scored the goals needed amid conceding one through a lapse in concentration.

... We must beef up, focus on league – Ernest

By Sibusiso Masilela sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

MBABANE Highlanders AM FC coach Ernest Mavuso has lamented their early exit in the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025/26 edition. Mavuso said they had a bad day in the office following their 2-0 loss to Ezulwini United on Sunday at Mavuso Sports Centre. “This was just not our day, and I don’t know what happened to my players. They looked like a different team compared to what it was during the preseason,” he said. The ex-Green Mamba mentor said they will go back to the drawing board to rectify their mistakes. Following their elimination, Mavuso stressed the importance of refocusing on the upcoming league matches. “We need to pull ourselves up and focus on the league. We must bounce back strong in the league and beef up certain areas of our squad,” he said. Meanwhile, United secured their place in the last eight of the annual knockout tournament through goals from Kwenzokuhle Khumalo and Delisa Thwala. The Musa Manyatsi led side will take on Ubombo Sugar in the last eight. The victory gave Highlanders President Shauwn Mkhize a rude welcome to local football.



Leverkusen sack Erik Ten Hag after two league matches

Page 20



Leopard earns 'Thikithi' to G. Mamba clash

Page 23



Eswatini *Wednesday 2*
Daily News *September, 2025*

Sport

‘Birds’ swallowed!

... Mbabane Swallows is the latest top side to be booted out of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup after being beaten 2-1 in sudden death penalties by a resilient Manzini Sea Birds on Monday night at Mavuso Sports Centre. *Page 23*