



By Kwanele Dhladhla

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Throngs of maidens arrive for Umhlanga 2025



▲Throngs of maidens have descended to the Ludzidzini Royal Residence from all corners of the country.

By Kwanele Dhladhla

THE rhythmic sound of traditional songs and chants echoed across the Ludzidzini and Engabezweni Royal Residences on Tuesday as thousands of maidens from all corners of Eswatini and beyond arrived to participate in the much-anticipated annual Umhlanga Reed Dance.

With bright smiles, colourful regalia, and an air of excitement, the young maidens streamed into the Royal Residences in readiness to be commissioned by His Majesty King Mswati III for the cultural ceremony that has become one of Eswatini’s most celebrated traditions.

The festival, which symbolises purity, unity, and the preservation of cultural identity, is a week-long event that draws participants and spectators alike. This year’s gathering has already seen a remarkable turnout, a sight that Acting Imbali Indvuna Bongiwe Hlatjwako described as both heart-warming and inspiring.

“I am pleased with the attendance of Imbali, who have come out in their numbers for the reed dance,” she said with pride as she watched the never-ending stream of maidens dressed in traditional regalia.

“We look forward to having a great time while honouring Umhlanga. His Majesty has ensured that the welfare of the maidens is well taken care of through the provision of buses, food, shelter, and adequate security throughout the festival,” said Hlatjwako.

Indeed, this year’s organisation has seen fleets of buses ferrying maidens safely from every corner of the kingdom, while spacious tents and kitchens have been prepared to accommodate the swelling crowds.

The young women, proudly referred to as Imbali, have not only gathered to celebrate culture but also to send a strong social message.

As they walked in jubilant groups, their harmonious voices rang out in melodious chimes, with songs declaring their support for the government’s fight against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The message, boldly echoed in their songs, highlighted the increasingly important role of young people in shaping a safer society.

“It is inspiring to hear our maidens raise their voices in unison against social ills. They are not only preserving tradition but also standing up for the values that safeguard their future,” remarked Hlatjwako.

For some, like the maidens from Mantjolo in Badplaas (South Africa), the occasion was a first-time experience. Their youthful excitement was evident as they ululated and cheered, eager to join the thousands in the grand cultural display.

Among thousands of maidens was 11-year-old Mukelo Vilakati from Ka-Kholwane, who could hardly contain her anticipation.

“I am looking forward to dancing in front of Their Majesties, sigodlo, and dignitaries,” she said with gleaming eyes, her innocence reflecting the true essence of Umhlanga’s celebration of purity.

Equally spirited was 20-year-old Temacanco Maziya, attending the reed dance for the sixth time.

She explained that her continued participation was her personal way of honouring tradition and celebrating her virginity.

“I am happy to be here again. Umhlanga gives us, as young women, an opportunity to proudly showcase our culture and values,” she said.

As the sun set over the sprawling royal homestead, the lively songs of the maidens carried into the cool evening air.

The grounds of Ludzidzini Royal Residence glowed with energy as maidens settled into their camps, preparing for the official commissioning ceremony where His Majesty King Mswati III will direct them to cut reeds on Wednesday afternoon. These reeds will later be presented at Ludzidzini, symbolising the unity and strength of the nation.



▲Imbali in jovial mood at Ludzidzini upon arrival on Tuesday.

The Umhlanga Reed Dance has grown to become an internationally recognised cultural spectacle, drawing tourists, diplomats, and researchers each year.

For Eswatini, however, its meaning runs far deeper—it is a sacred tradition that binds generations, instils discipline among the youth, and reaffirms loyalty to the monarchy.

As thousands of Imbali continued to arrive, the atmosphere at Ludzidzini promises a week filled with colour, song, and the graceful steps of young maidens determined to keep Eswatini’s cultural flame burning bright.

Imbali deliver strong message against GBV

By Kwanele Dhladhla

THE procession of Imbali as they arrived at Ludzidzini Royal Residence on Tuesday afternoon was more than a celebration of cultural heritage but a bold statement against gender-based violence (GBV).

The maidens, clad in their traditional attire with dignity, declared their collective commitment to championing the fight against GBV. With powerful chants, songs, and coordinated displays, the young women used the cultural platform to shine a spotlight on one of society's most pressing challenges.

The Imbali reminded onlookers that the spirit of the Umhlanga, rooted in values of purity, unity, and discipline, must also be reflected in how communities protect women and girls.

A song that captured this theme, “*Ucambela tsine emanga utsi ulitjiti*” (loosely translated as “You Walk with lies pretending to be a firebrand”), was sung by the maidens, underscoring their call for truth, respect, and dignity.

Speaking to the gathered crowds, Acting Imbali Indvuna, Bongiwe Hlatjwako, commended the maidens for turning tradition into a vehicle for advocacy. She said the presence of such a large contingent of Imbali sent a resounding message to the nation about the strength and agency of



▲ Imbali in song and dance upon arrival at Ludzidzini Royal Residence.

young women.

“I am deeply impressed by the throngs of Imbali that have poured into the Royal Residence. Their bold stance against gender-based violence is a reminder that respect must be the guiding principle in all our interactions. Throughout this weeklong event, let us embrace a spirit of respect – for ourselves, for each other, and for our culture,” said Hlatjwako.

She stressed that Umhlanga was not only a platform for celebrating purity and preserving Eswatini’s heritage, but also an

opportunity for young women to express their voices on issues that affect their daily lives.

She called on the maidens to continue promoting self-respect and to carry forward the values they exhibit at the Royal Residence into their homes and communities.

The Imbali, in turn, pledged to be at the forefront of efforts to curb violence against women and children. They urged communities to break the silence that often surrounds abuse and to support survivors with compassion and action. Their collective



▲ Acting Imbali Indvuna Bongiwe Hlatjwako said the attendance of Imbali was impressive as they continued to flock the Ludzidzini Royal Residence in preparation to be commissioned by His Majesty King Mswati III on Wednesday.

stance echoed the broader national and regional calls for urgent measures to end GBV.

The arrival of the maidens also set the tone for the week of cultural activity leading up to the commissioning ceremony by His Majesty King Mswati III on Wednesday. As they settled into the Ludzidzini Royal Residence, excitement filled the air, with many expressing pride in their role as custodians of Eswatini tradition.

Yet, the central message of this year’s Umhlanga was clear: Eswatini’s maidens are not only guardians of culture but also champions of social justice.

Through their colourful arrival and resonant voices, they have declared that gender-based violence has no place in society, and they are ready to lead by example in fostering a culture of respect, dignity, and peace.



▲ Buses transported throngs of Imbali to Ludzidzini Royal Residence in readiness of the Umhlanga Ceremony.



▲▼ Madiens in jubilation as they danced their way to the Royal Residence.



▲ Mukelo Vilakati (11) who is attending Umhlanga for the first time said she looks forward to dancing in front of His Majesty King Mswati III, sigodlo and the entire nation.



Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

HMCS showcases inclusive innovation at Trade Fair

HIS Majesty’s Correctional Services (HMCS) has raised the bar on inclusivity at this year’s Eswatini International Trade Fair, making sure that no one is left behind – not even those living with disabilities.

The institution’s stall at the Mavuso Trade Centre has been a hive of activity since the fair began, drawing attention not only for its cutting-edge technologies but also for its commitment to accessibility. According to the HMCS Communication Office, this initiative is part of Commissioner General Phindile Lomakhosini Dlamini’s vision to ensure that every Liswati, regardless of physical ability, can participate fully in national events.

“This week we welcomed over five persons who are blind, and they were able to receive a booklet designed specifically for them,” said Communication Officer Majaha Kunene in an interview with Eswatini Daily News. “It is important that even persons with disabilities find the stall welcoming and resourceful.”

The booklets are produced in formats that are friendly to the visually impaired, ensuring that information about the Correctional Services’ programmes and innovations is not only available but also accessible. For those with hearing impairments, the stall has

made provisions to ensure communication support so that they, too, can interact meaningfully with the exhibits.

Kunene emphasized that this inclusive approach aligns with the Correctional Services’ broader mission of rehabilitation and community integration. “Our Commissioner General believes in a holistic approach to service delivery. The principle is simple: leave no one behind,” he said.

Visitors to the HMCS stall have expressed appreciation for this gesture, noting that it reflects the government’s commitment to inclusivity and equality. The stall continues to draw large crowds, not just for its displays but for the strong statement it makes about respect, dignity, and accessibility for all.

The Eswatini International Trade Fair, which is currently underway, has become an important platform for showcasing innovation and inclusivity across different sectors. For His Majesty’s Correctional Services, this year’s participation stands out as a testament to the institution’s evolving role in society — not just as a custodian of justice, but also as a champion of inclusivity and human dignity.



▲ An HMC officer ready to attend to those living with disabilities.

Matsapha Town Council seals partnership with Peace Corps

In a significant step towards strengthening service delivery and youth development, the Matsapha Town Council has entered into a Partnership Agreement with the Peace Corps, marking a milestone for the Kingdom’s bustling industrial hub.

Speaking at the signing ceremony yesterday, Mayor Lindiwe Dlamini of Matsapha Town Council warmly welcomed the collaboration, describing it as a forward-looking initiative that will expand the Council’s technical capacity while driving innovation and sustainable growth.

“On behalf of Matsapha Town Council, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome you all to today’s ceremony, where we gather for a moment of significance – the signing of a Partnership Agreement between Matsapha Town Council and the Peace Corps,” Mayor Dlamini said.

The Mayor highlighted that Matsapha Town Council, known for its industrious spirit, is determined to maximize its limited resources by leveraging strategic partnerships that enhance service delivery. “Today marks another step forward in our journey of optimizing opportunities nested in partnerships and collaboration to better serve our community. Through this partnership, we are not only enriching our technical capacity and capabilities but also strengthening initiatives that focus on youth development, innovation, and sustainable growth,” she explained.

The agreement will see Matsapha benefitting from the expertise and technical assistance of the Peace Corps, with a strong emphasis on youth-focused initiatives. Through a virtual service pilot programme, local stakeholders and the international volunteers will share knowledge and experiences, ensuring a mutually beneficial exchange. “As we embark on this journey, we look forward to drawing from the wealth of expertise and technical assistance the Peace Corps brings and sharing our knowledge

and expertise with our virtual service pilot participants,” Mayor Dlamini noted.

The Mayor reaffirmed the Council’s dedication to fostering an environment that encourages innovation, growth, and collaboration. “As Council, we are committed to creating an enabling and compelling environment for innovation, growth and collaboration. We trust that this partnership marks the beginning of a long and fruitful journey that will benefit not only the municipality but also the wider Matsapha community,” she said.

In her closing remarks, Mayor Dlamini extended a warm welcome to all attendees, describing Matsapha as the Kingdom’s investment hub, and expressed optimism that the collaboration would open new doors for both local and international stakeholders.

The partnership is expected to enhance Matsapha’s role as a driver of economic growth, while also ensuring that the youth and communities at large gain opportunities in capacity-building, innovation, and sustainable development.

“On behalf of Matsapha Town Council, it is my pleasure to warmly welcome you all to today’s ceremony, where we gather for a moment of significance – the signing of a Partnership Agreement between Matsapha Town Council and the Peace Corps”



▲ Katy Weeks-Peace Corps Director of Programing and Training looking on as Matsapha Town Council Mayor Lindiwe Dlamini and CEO Lucky Sukati sign the MoU.

Pensioner loses E200 000 to facata

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

A 47-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly defrauding a pensioner a sum of E200 000, which was her pension pay-out, under the pretence that he will assist her invest the money.

This has resulted in Sithembiso Senzo Matsebula from Siteki area, who appeared before Principal Magistrates Florence Msibi at the Manzini Magistrates Court, being charged with Theft by False Pretences. He committed the offence on July 16, 2025 in Manzini.

According to the charge sheet, with intent to steal, Matsebula misrepresented himself to one Pauline Mnguni of Sidvokodvo area that she must give him money in cash amounting to E200 000 under the pretence that she will receive passive income every month, knowing very well that this was not true and through the means of the said misrepresentation, he obtained and stole the sum of E200 000 from Pauline.

Matsebula was remanded into custody until September 3, 2026 pending trial. However, he applied for bail and he was granted same fixed at E10 000, under the normal bail conditions, which include amongst others, that he does not interfere



▲ A 47-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly defrauding a pensioner a sum of E200 000

with State witnesses, that he does not commit a similar offence while out on bail and that he reports to court without fail each time he was ordered to do so. Meanwhile, Matsebula is alleged to have convinced the senior citizen to surrender her pension money to him on grounds that she was investing the money as she going to receive a monthly passive income thereafter.

Two alleged facata scammers arrested for defrauding victims over E80 000

TWO more alleged ‘facata’ scammers have been arrested for defrauding members of the public money amounting to over 80 000.

This has resulted in Philani Henry Mkhwanazi (26) from Mahlabatsini area and Nomfundo Philile Hurube (29) of Mayiwane area appearing before Principal Magistrate Florence Msibi at the Manzini Magistrates Court on Tuesday.

In total, the duo was slapped with 30 charges of fraud.

The counts that the partners in crime faces, comprises of Theft by False Pretences, the contravention of the Prevention of Organized Crime Act of 2018, the Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2011, and the Computer Crime and Cybercrime Act 6 of 2022.

In most of the charges, the ‘facata’ scammers are said to have impersonated bank officials and informed their unsuspecting victims that their accounts were under cybercrime attack and therefore, they should provide them with their banking credentials, so that they could assist them to avoid having their accounts being hacked.

However, after receiving the banking credentials, they would then use them to remotely withdraw their victims’ monies from their bank accounts.

In other instances, the ‘facata’ scammers would con their

victims after posing as the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS). This they did by deceiving their victims that they were investigating ‘facata’ scams and their numbers have been hacked and were being used by the infamous group (‘facata’ scammers) to defraud members of the public their monies.

They would then demand their victims’ banking credentials under the pretence that they wanted to assist them in ensuring that their numbers were no longer used by the scammers to scam unsuspecting members of the public their monies, and in the process, they would use same (banking credentials) to remotely withdraw their monies.

They were both remanded in custody until October 10, 2025, pending their committal to the High Court.

Meanwhile, this takes the total number of facata scammers who have been arrested so far to 79, with over E3.7 million stolen from Emaswati.

The infamous ‘facata’ scammers have been responsible for stealing monies from unsuspecting members of the public amounting to millions of Emalangeni by tricking them into punching numbers on their phones, only for money to be remotely withdrawn from their Mobile Money (MoMo) and bank accounts.



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Stories by Delisa Magagula

15 AEC Pastors granted bail as courts hear contempt case

FIFTEEN pastors of the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC), who were arrested on charges of contempt of court, have been granted bail by the High Court in Mbabane.

Judge John Magagula released the clergymen on their own recognisance, pending the outcome of their appeal.

The arrests, which drew widespread attention, followed weeks of tension within the AEC. Disputes over leadership and governance had earlier reached the High Court, which ruled against the continued stay of the church's executive committee.

In response, congregants alleged that certain pastors were being forcibly removed from their positions, that church property had been turned into private holdings, and that worshippers were being locked out of local assemblies.

The 15 pastors were taken into custody after allegedly defying a court order linked to this dispute.

Their detention sparked a demonstration

outside the Mbabane Police Station, where dozens of church members gathered in prayer, calling for their release.

Judge Magagula noted that the pastors had no previous criminal records and posed no flight risk. He ruled that they could be released without the payment of bail money, on the condition that they return to court when required.

Speaking outside court, Siphesihle Nkhabindze, a member of the church, said the ruling was a relief for families and congregations.

"We have been on our knees since their arrest. Today we believe justice has prevailed," he said.

The pastors are expected to continue with their appeal in the coming weeks.

Until then, they are free to resume their church duties under close scrutiny from both their congregations and the courts.



▲ AEC members who were praying outside the Mbabane Police Station. This was before the case was heard by Judge John Magagula.

Patient sentenced for theft of mobile phone

AT the Mbabane Government Hospital, what began as a medical visit ended in criminal charges for Owethu Mhlongo, who was convicted of stealing a fellow patient's mobile phone.

Court documents state that Mhlongo had checked into the hospital for treatment. While in the ward, he noticed another patient's Nokia C10 and decided to take it. The theft was quickly reported, and hospital staff alerted security officers, who apprehended Mhlongo before he could leave the premises.

Appearing before the Mbabane Magistrates Court, Mhlongo pleaded guilty to the charge of theft. The magistrate

sentenced him to two years in prison or a fine of E2,000.

In handing down the sentence, the magistrate stressed that theft in hospitals was particularly disruptive, as patients are already vulnerable.

"Hospitals are meant to be places of healing. Acts of theft not only harm victims materially but also undermine trust in public institutions," the court noted.

The complainant, who had relied on the phone to keep in contact with family members during treatment, welcomed the swift handling of the case.

"It was not just a phone it was my only way of speaking to my children while in hospital," he said.

Zimbabwean woman jailed for Dagga possession

IN a separate case before the Mbabane Magistrate's Court, Zimbabwean National Stella Mabuto was sentenced to five years in prison or a fine of E5,000 after being caught with 10.7 kilograms of cannabis.

Court records show that Mabuto admitted to travelling across the Ngwenya Border specifically to purchase dagga for resale. She was arrested during a routine inspection, where police discovered the stash hidden in her luggage.

During sentencing, the presiding magistrate remarked that her honesty in confessing her intentions was unusual but did not exempt her from punishment.

"The accused openly admitted that she came to Eswatini to buy cannabis for resale. While the court acknowledges her frankness, the seriousness of the offence under the Pharmacy Act cannot be ignored," the magistrate said.

Mabuto's lawyer pleaded for leniency, arguing that she was a first-time offender and a single mother.

However, the prosecution pressed for



▲ Zimbabwean national Stella Mabuto who was jailed for dagga possession.

a custodial sentence, citing the quantity of the drug and the clear intent to distribute.

The court's judgment underscored Eswatini's tough stance on drug trafficking, particularly across borders. Mabuto has the option of paying the fine but, failing that, will serve the five-year term.

Man fined E5 000 for drink-driving, resisting arrest

THE Mbabane Magistrates Court has fined Mlungu Dlamini E5, 000 or, failing payment, sentenced him to five years in prison after convicting him of drunk driving and resisting arrest.

According to court records, the incident occurred when police officers on patrol flagged down Dlamini's vehicle after noticing erratic driving along one of the capital's main roads.

Officers reported that upon stopping the car, Dlamini displayed visible signs of intoxication and became aggressive when asked to comply with standard procedures.

The prosecution told the court that when officers attempted to place him under arrest, Dlamini resisted and allegedly tried to jump out of the moving police vehicle while being transported to the station.

The court heard that the situation posed a danger both to him and to the officers.

In his ruling, the presiding magistrate

described Dlamini's conduct as reckless and potentially life-threatening.

"Drunk driving already endangers lives on our roads. To resist arrest and attempt to flee from lawful custody aggravates the offence," the magistrate said.

The defence argued for leniency, stating that Dlamini was remorseful and had no previous convictions.

However, the magistrate ruled that deterrence was necessary to discourage similar behaviour, particularly given the high rate of road accidents linked to alcohol consumption.

In addition to the fine or prison term, Dlamini's driver's licence has been suspended pending further review by the relevant traffic authorities.

The case underscores the continued crackdown on drunk driving in Eswatini, where traffic authorities and police have intensified enforcement measures to curb rising accidents on national roads.

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

EIPA launches Nation's first E-Commerce platform

THE Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) has described the launch of the country's first government-led e-commerce platform as a defining moment in the Kingdom's economic journey. Speaking on behalf of the EIPA Chief Executive Officer, Sibani Mngomezulu, Acting CEO Sibusiso Mnisi said the platform named Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop marked the beginning of a new era in trade, innovation, and opportunity.

Gold races to all-time high above \$3 500

GOLD prices scaled the \$3,500 per ounce level to hit a record high on Tuesday, as mounting expectations for a U.S. Federal Reserve interest rate cut this month lifted demand for the precious metal. Spot gold was up 0.1 per cent at \$3,480.57 per ounce as of 1125 GMT, after hitting a record high of \$3,508.50 earlier in the session. Bullion has gained 32 per cent so far this year.

Rand falls as dollar gains ahead of key US data

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand fell on Tuesday against a much stronger dollar as investors awaited key U.S. data that could influence the Federal Reserve's interest rate decision this month. At 1314 GMT, the rand traded at 17.7350 against the dollar, about 0.6 per cent weaker than Monday's close. The dollar last traded 0.8 per cent firmer against a basket of currencies, dulling the appeal of most emerging market currencies.

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FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.3157	17.7812
G.B. Pound	23.1827	23.8588
EURO	20.1672	20.7759
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	

Nedbank champions green finance at Eswatini International Trade Fair

By Thokozani Mazibuko

NEDBANK Eswatini has reinforced its commitment to driving sustainable development and climate-smart innovation through the launch of its Green Finance Seminar, held on Tuesday as part of the 2025 Eswatini International Trade Fair.

Addressing stakeholders, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and policymakers, Nedbank Eswatini Managing Director Fikile Nkosi described the seminar as a milestone in the country's journey toward building a sustainable and inclusive economy.

"It is an honour and great pleasure to welcome you to the Nedbank Green Finance Seminar, a key feature of our presence at the Eswatini International Trade Fair 2025. Today marks an important moment in our journey towards building a more sustainable and inclusive economy," Nkosi said.

She emphasised that at Nedbank, sustainability is not treated as a side responsibility but as a strategic imperative.

Through initiatives such as the Nedbank Green Zone, the bank is showcasing innovative solutions aimed at addressing climate change while supporting green entrepreneurship and small businesses committed to sustainability.

Nkosi further outlined the bank's broader purpose of using financial expertise to create meaningful social and environmental impact: "Our commitment to green finance reflects our belief that economic progress must go hand in hand with environmental stewardship.

This seminar is a direct expression of that purpose, as we seek to advance green finance as a catalyst for inclusive growth and environmental resilience," she added.

Tied to Global Goals

The Managing Director noted that Nedbank's sustainability strategy is strongly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly:

The seminar's keynote speaker, Mokgadi Maloba, Sustainability Expert at Nedbank Group, presented insights into how the financial sector can play a transformative role in enabling climate resilience, innovation, and inclusive growth across Africa.

Her address highlighted some of the climate-smart initiatives Nedbank is driving across the region, positioning the bank as the "green bank" that prioritises environmental stewardship while promoting economic growth.

In addition to the keynote, the programme featured a panel discussion with sustainability sector leaders, who explored the evolving narrative of green finance and its implications for business competitiveness, investment models, and policy development in Eswatini.

Nkosi urged stakeholders to actively participate, collaborate, and embrace innovative financing mechanisms that can unlock the po-



▲ Nedbank Eswatini Managing Director Fikile Nkosi delivering her remarks.



▲ Mokgadi Maloba from Nedbank South Africa was the guest speaker.



▲ The audience at the Nedbank Green Zone.

tential of green finance for the Kingdom and beyond. "Let's make this seminar a catalyst for meaningful change," she concluded.

The Green Finance Seminar was widely welcomed by attendees as a timely initiative, particularly as Eswatini faces increasing climate challenges while seeking to expand its green

economy and attract investment in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and eco-friendly infrastructure.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
SDG 13: Climate Action

EIPA launches nation's first e-commerce platform

By Delisa Magagula

THE Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) has described the launch of the country's first government-led e-commerce platform as a defining moment in the Kingdom's economic journey.

Speaking on behalf of the EIPA Chief Executive Officer, Sibani Mngomezulu, Acting CEO Sibusiso Mnisi said the platform named Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop marked the beginning of a new era in trade, innovation, and opportunity.

He was addressing government officials, private sector partners, and entrepreneurs during the soft launch of the platform in Mbabane.

Mnisi stated that the initiative was more than just a digital marketplace, calling it a bridge connecting entrepreneurs to new customers, new markets, and new possibilities. He emphasized that the tool was designed to enhance trade, streamline transactions, and place Eswatini's products and services directly into the hands of consumers locally and, over time, internationally.

He explained that the objective of 'Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop' was to promote inclusive economic growth by providing companies of all sizes with the digital infrastructure necessary to thrive in today's modern economy.

Mnisi highlighted the collaborative effort that had made the project possible. He expressed gratitude to International Integration Systems Inc.

The technology partner responsible for developing the platform, noting that its technical expertise had been central to turning the vision into reality.

He also acknowledged MTN Eswatini for integrating MoMo Pay into the system, describing it as a secure and accessible payment solution that would empower both buyers and sellers.

In addition, the Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) were praised for ensuring that deliveries across the country could be managed efficiently through its postal network.

"These partnerships exemplify what we can achieve when public and private sectors unite for the common good," Mnisi remarked.

He added that the collaboration aligned with international calls for stronger partnerships between governments, business support organizations, and private companies in order to engage more effectively with micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Turning his message to Eswatini's business community, Mnisi urged companies to seize the opportunity.

He said the platform was created specifically with them in mind, offering space for sellers of handcrafted goods, agricultural products, fashion, and services to grow their markets.

"This is your moment. We invite you to on-board, engage, and help shape the future of e-commerce in Eswatini," he said.

He explained that the platform was still in its pilot phase and that participation from local businesses would be critical in refining



▲ Director of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Mluleki Dlamini during the Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop launch.

and improving the system.

He revealed that plans were already in place to expand payment options and delivery services, creating a richer and more competitive ecosystem soon.

Mnisi noted that the launch of Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop was in line with the outcomes of the recent Global SME Ministerial Forum and the Trade Promotion Leadership Dialogue, both of which had called for stronger collaboration among stakeholders to support small and large companies.

He pointed out that these international platforms had specifically challenged business support organizations like EIPA to lead efforts in helping SMEs embrace new technologies and integrate them into their business operations.

"This launch sends a clear signal to the world that Eswatini is open for digital business. We are embracing innovation, investing in our entrepreneurs, and building the infrastructure that will carry us into a prosperous future," Mnisi declared.

Mnisi emphasized that the digital economy was no longer optional for businesses seeking to remain competitive.

He said the platform would enable local entrepreneurs to improve efficiency, widen market access, and position themselves to compete both regionally and globally.

He described the initiative as a timely response to the global shift towards digital commerce, where online platforms are becoming essential channels for growth.

According to Mnisi, empowering SMEs to adapt to this shift was not only necessary for their survival but also vital for national economic development.

He further explained that the e-commerce platform would serve as a practical tool to encourage innovation, foster resilience among businesses, and contribute to job creation.

Mnisi concluded his remarks by calling on all stakeholders to support the initiative. He



▲ EIPA Acting CEO Sibusiso Mnisi delivering his keynote remarks on behalf of the CEO Sibani Mngomezulu.

said the government, private sector, and citizens alike had a role to play in ensuring the success of Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop.

"Let us build something extraordinary together," he urged.

The Acting CEO underscored that the success of the platform would depend on collective commitment, continued innovation, and the willingness of businesses to embrace digital opportunities.

He assured stakeholders that EIPA would remain actively engaged in improving the platform and expanding its reach to ensure it becomes a cornerstone of Eswatini's digital economy.

The soft launch of Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop has been hailed as a milestone for Eswatini, signalling a shift in the way the Kingdom approaches trade and investment.

For many entrepreneurs, the platform promises to reduce barriers to entry in the

digital marketplace and create new pathways for growth.

By combining secure payments, reliable delivery services, and technical innovation, the initiative reflects a model of inclusive development that could strengthen Eswatini's competitiveness in the region.

Mnisi reaffirmed EIPA's commitment to supporting businesses at all levels, adding that this was only the beginning of a broader journey towards building a vibrant, technology-driven economy.

He reminded participants that the journey ahead required dedication and collaboration but stressed that the rewards greater market access, stronger SMEs, and enhanced national prosperity would be well worth the effort.

"The launch of Buy Eswatini 2.0 Shop is not just about today. It is about laying the foundation for tomorrow," he said.

Gold races to all-time high above \$3 500

By Anmol Choubey and Ishaan Arora

GOLD prices scaled the \$3,500 per ounce level to hit a record high on Tuesday, as mounting expectations for a U.S. Federal Reserve interest rate cut this month lifted demand for the precious metal.

Spot gold was up 0.1 per cent at \$3,480.57 per ounce as of 1125 GMT, after hitting a record high of \$3,508.50 earlier in the session. Bullion has gained 32 per cent so far this year.

“Gold’s rally is set to be heavily influenced by how much the Fed’s rate-cutting path adheres to market projections,” said Han Tan, chief market analyst at Nemo.money.

“It still enjoys enough fundamental tailwinds, from central bank purchases to safe-haven demand - especially if trade tariffs take a meaningful toll on global economic growth - going into next year,” he added.

Traders are currently pricing in a 90 per cent chance of a 25-basis-point Fed rate cut on September 17, according to the CME FedWatch tool. Non-yielding gold typically performs well in a low-interest-rate environment.

Long regarded as a dependable hedge against geopolitical and economic turmoil, gold has rallied to multiple record highs in 2025, drawing support from ongoing central bank buying amid a move away from the U.S. dollar, strong safe-haven demand in light of geopolitical and trade uncertainty, plus broad dollar weakness, analysts say.

Spot gold prices rose 27 per cent in 2024, and broke the \$3,000 per ounce level for the first time in March this year as uncertainty around U.S. President Donald Trump’s trade policies sent investors flocking to the safe-haven asset.

Meanwhile, Trump has criticised the Fed and its chair, Jerome Powell, for months for not lowering interest rates.

Investors are now looking forward to the



▲Jewellery is displayed at the Gold Souk market in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

U.S. nonfarm payrolls data due on Friday to determine the size of an expected Fed rate cut later this month.

“All the indicators - fundamental and technical - point toward a sustained rally. As always, we might not go up in a straight line, but we are in ‘buy the dip’ mode... plus, gold remains an uncorrelated asset to stocks, real estate, and credit,” said Hugo Pascal, a precious metals trader at InProved.

SPDR Gold Trust, the world’s largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, said its holdings rose 1.01 per cent to 977.68 tons on Friday - its highest level since August 2022.

In a quarterly Reuters poll conducted in July, analysts forecast gold would average \$3,220 in 2025, up from January’s estimate of \$2,756/oz.

Spot silver was down 0.4 per cent at \$40.50 per ounce, after hitting its highest since September 2011 in the previous session.

Platinum lost 0.8 per cent to \$1,388.22 and palladium fell 1.3 per cent to \$1,123.14. (Reuters)



▲The sun sets over the capital’s skyline as warm temperatures, wind and emissions combined to trigger a ‘high’ alert for air pollution, in London, Britain.

World Bank urges fresh push on economic threat of pollution

By Simon Jessop and Marc Jones

LONDON — Degraded land, polluted air and water stress pose a direct global economic threat but using natural resources more efficiently could cut pollution by half, one of the World Bank’s senior managing directors told Reuters.

The damage is particularly acute for low-income countries most at threat from poverty, climate change and biodiversity loss, Axel van Trotsenburg said.

Speaking alongside the publication of a new report on Monday, he said around 80 per cent of people in low-income nations were exposed to all three and the World Bank was committed to responding even as many countries cut aid budgets.

“Our commitment... is ending poverty on a liveable planet, full stop. We will not waver on this,” van Trotsenburg said.

Among the most impacted countries are Burundi, where 8 million people face water risk and air pollution, and 7 million face land degradation. In Malawi, 12 million people face all three risks, the report said.

More broadly, 90 per cent of the world’s population face at least one of the challenges, with the report urging countries

to repurpose subsidies currently spent on harmful activities.

The report is published against a fractious political backdrop ahead of November’s COP30 climate talks in Brazil.

The World Bank and other multilateral lenders are also awaiting the outcome of a U.S. review, of their operations ordered by President Donald Trump in February.

The World Bank would provide data-backed evidence to inform discussions on environmental degradation among its member governments, van Trotsenburg said.

The report estimated that forests help around half of the world’s rain clouds form and said deforestation cut rainfall at a cost of \$14 billion a year for the nine-country Amazon region alone, a material hit for the affected nations.

It also means landscapes are less able to store and release moisture slowly over time. That amplifies the effects of droughts and results in a \$379 billion hit, or 8 per cent of global agricultural economic output.

While ecological threats were often seen as being distant, the report zeroed in on economic impacts happening now.

“We’ve often had this mantra that we believed countries need to grow first, pollute and clean up later. What this evidence is telling you is that is simply false,” the bank’s chief economist for sustainable development and report co-author, Richard Damania, said. (Reuters)

Rand falls as dollar gains ahead of key US data

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand fell on Tuesday against a much stronger dollar as investors awaited key U.S. data that could influence the Federal Reserve’s interest rate decision this month.

At 1314 GMT, the rand traded at 17.7350 against the dollar, about 0.6 per cent weaker than Monday’s close.

The dollar last traded 0.8 per cent firmer against a basket of currencies, dulling the appeal of most emerging market currencies.

Job openings and private payrolls data are due on Thursday, followed by nonfarm payrolls on Friday, with August inflation data scheduled for September 11.

Like other risk-sensitive currencies, the rand often takes cues from global drivers such as U.S. policy and economic data in the absence of major domestic economic releases.

Gold prices hit a record high on Tuesday, but Investec’s chief economist Annabel Bishop, said the higher prices in South Africa’s commodities exports, metals and minerals, have not translated into the same strength in the rand.

On the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the Top-40 index last traded down 1.1 per cent.

South Africa’s benchmark 2035 government bond weakened, bringing the yield up 5.5 basis points to 9.645 per cent. (Reuters)



▲South African Rand notes are seen in this illustration.

Amazon US Prime sign-ups slow despite expanded promotion, data shows

AMAZON, opens new tab doubled its Prime Day discount sales to four days this year and touted blowout numbers days after the event. But by one critical metric, it missed the mark.

Sign-ups in the U.S. failed to meet last year's total and even the company's own target, according to internal company data reviewed by Reuters.

The world's largest online retailer registered 5.4 million U.S. sign-ups over the 21-day run-up to Prime Day and its four-day sales event from July 8 to July 11. That was around 116,000 fewer than for the same period a year earlier and 106,000 below the company's own goal, a roughly 2% decline in both metrics.

The data, which is not publicly available, offers a rare glimpse into Amazon's vaunted - and closely guarded - Prime business, a paid subscription service that offers fast delivery at no added cost and access to streaming content, among other benefits. Amazon seldom discusses details of its Prime program.

Reuters was unable to determine how many days Amazon used in its calculation for the full 2024 period.

Amazon said it had achieved record-breaking sign-ups in the 25 days around Prime Day, without providing specifics. "Prime membership continues to show strong growth and customer engagement in the U.S. and internationally," the company said in a statement to Reuters.

Prime Day is viewed as the marquee event outside of the holiday shopping season to attract new members to Amazon Prime, two people familiar with the matter said. But subscriptions typically fall off after the event once the discounts disappear, said the sources, who declined to be identified as



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

they are not authorized to discuss internal business.

A pioneer of speedy delivery, Amazon is facing growing competition from Walmart , which has ramped up its own membership program offering fast delivery and other perks.

With the Trump administration's tariffs biting into importers and consumers alike, Wall Street had expected a duller Prime Day than usual, with fewer sellers and discounts.

However, CEO Andy Jassy in a call with analysts in July described Prime Day as

Amazon's "biggest ever", citing record sales, items sold, and sign-ups in the lead-up to the event, saying customers saved "billions of dollars."

STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT

During the four-day event, Amazon signed up 1.6 million Prime U.S. subscribers, exceeding an internal target by about 6%, or 87,000, the data showed.

But in the three weeks prior to Prime Day, a closely-watched internal metric, Amazon registered 3.9 million new U.S. Prime members, 185,000 fewer than during the

same period in 2024 and 193,000 below its goal, about a 5% miss in each case.

Reuters was unable to review worldwide data and Amazon declined to make it available.

"Prime is strategically very important to Amazon," said Colin Sebastian, an R.W. Baird analyst. "People on Prime spend more on Amazon and they are less likely to be enticed by competitors' offers of lower prices."

Encouraged by no-cost shipping, sometimes as fast as one hour, customers tend to buy more from Amazon.com, from e-books to streaming movies and music. Prime members in the U.S., its largest single market, spent an average \$1,170 with Amazon in 2024 compared with \$570 for non-members, according to Consumer Intelligence Research Partners.

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos once said he wanted to make Prime so compelling that consumers will feel they are "being irresponsible" if they are not members.

Amazon introduced Prime in 2005 for \$79 per year and has steadily increased subscription fees, most recently to \$139 in 2022. The program drove \$23.9 billion in subscription revenue in the first half of this year, making it a key growth driver for the company.

To expand memberships, Amazon has widened its discounted student program to individuals aged 18-24 and offered a six-month free trial. The company also plans to invest over \$4 billion to grow its rural delivery network in the U.S.

(Reuters)

Musk's X Corp wins spat with former employees over arbitration fees

X Corp cannot be forced to cover the upfront fees of arbitrating a series of legal disputes by former employees who lost their jobs after Elon Musk acquired the social media company, a U.S. appeals court ruled on Tuesday.

A panel of the New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said, opens new tab an arbitration firm must decide if X should pay the fees or the company can split them with the seven former workers who claim X is attempting to derail their cases.

By opting to go through arbitration, the workers forfeited the ability to have federal courts resolve any disputes over fees, the court said.

"It is hard to see how the twin goals of arbitration, namely, settling disputes efficiently and avoiding long and expensive litigation, would be served by a district court's intervention into such procedural disputes," Circuit Judge Gerard Lynch wrote for the court.

X and Shannon Liss-Riordan, a lawyer for the former employees who filed the lawsuit, did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Liss-Riordan has said that X has refused to pay arbitration fees in hundreds of cases.

Musk fired approximately 6,000 employees after his 2022 acquisition of Twitter, which he rebranded X. Many employees sued over their terminations, and X last month agreed to pay an undisclosed sum to settle a lawsuit in California by ex-workers who said they were owed \$500 million in



▲ 'X' logo is seen on the top of the headquarters of the messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter, in downtown San Francisco, California, U.S.,

severance pay.

An agreement signed by most Twitter employees required them to bring legal disputes with the company to the private arbitration firm JAMS rather than to court.

JAMS rules say that employers who re-

quire workers to sign arbitration agreements must cover initial fees of roughly \$1,500 before an arbitrator is assigned to a case.

X refused to pay, claiming it did not require arbitration because workers had the chance to opt out of it when they were hired.

Reversing a Manhattan federal judge who had ruled for the workers, the 2nd Circuit on Tuesday said it had no power to resolve the issue because the arbitration agreements reserve procedural disputes for JAMS.

(Reuters)

DA criticises Ramaphosa's Zimbabwe land reform praise, linking it to ANC's expropriation plans

THE Democratic Alliance (DA) has strongly criticised President Cyril Ramaphosa's remarks praising Zimbabwe's land reform programme during his visit to Harare last week.

IOL reported last week that Ramaphosa was in Zimbabwe at the invitation of President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, where he attended the annual Zimbabwe Agricultural Show as guest of honour.

Speaking at the event, Ramaphosa congratulated Zimbabwe for reviving its agricultural sector through policy reforms, investment in irrigation, mechanisation, and empowering both large- and small-scale farmers.

"On independence in 1980, the new democratic government of Zimbabwe had to take on the momentous task of dismantling colonial-era patterns of land ownership. Most of the country's commercially productive land and large-scale farms were owned by whites.

The black majority was confined to communal lands and excluded from commercial farming," said Ramaphosa.

"It was therefore essential – for both historical redress and food security, development and economic growth – that the government embarked on ambitious reforms to facilitate the entry of black Zimbabweans

into productive agriculture, including support to small-scale farmers."

Reacting to Ramaphosa's remarks, DA national spokesperson and Member of Parliament Willie Aucamp said the president was "wrongfully praising" a programme that devastated Zimbabwe's economy.

"The DA condemns and rejects this praise by Ramaphosa for a process which left Zimbabwe in tatters,

destroying its economy, destroying its foreign relations, and creating famine for its people," Aucamp said.

He argued that because land was not legally transferred, Zimbabwe was left with crippling financial reparations due to former farmers and landowners.

"Ramaphosa is attempting to whitewash the disaster in Zimbabwe, to create momentum for the ANC's land expropriation agenda in terms of the Expropriation Act of 2025," Aucamp added.

While acknowledging the need for land reform in South Africa, the DA insisted it must be pursued within the bounds of the Constitution and rule of law.

"The DA firmly believes in the need to redress the injustices of the past, particularly through fair and lawful land reform that restores dignity and economic opportunity.



▲ President Cyril Ramaphosa was in Harare last week, at the invitation of Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa.

However, this redress must occur within the bounds of the Constitution and the rule of law, which Expropriation Without Compensation does not meet," Aucamp said.

He further stressed that the Government of National Unity does not endorse Zimbabwe's "land confiscation" model.

(Reuters)

Madagascar receives three colonial-era human skulls from France

MADAGASCAR ceremonially received three colonial-era skulls from France on Tuesday, 128 years after they were taken from the Indian Ocean nation, including one believed to be that of a Malagasy king beheaded by French troops.

Public pressure has grown in recent years for former colonial powers such as France and Britain to return artefacts taken from Africa and Asia.

The skulls, presumed to belong to King Toera and two others from the Sakalava ethnic group, were formally handed over to Madagascar at a ceremony held at the French culture ministry in late August.

A military guard of honour raised swords as three men in traditional dress carried the skulls, draped in red cloth, out of the plane that landed in Antananarivo late on Monday.

The skulls were welcomed with a ceremony on Tuesday attended by President Andry Rajoelina at the Mausoleum of Antananari-

vo, the resting place of Malagasy national heroes.

A police officer, a soldier and a gendarme carried the skulls into the mausoleum, where Rajoelina, wearing a traditional "Lamba Landy" textile draped over a black suit, inspected a guard of honour.

"We are here to pay tribute and honour the heroes and those who fought for the homeland 128 years ago under the leadership of King Toera and his soldiers," Rajoelina said. The king's skull will now be taken to Ambiky, in the Menabe region, where he was killed in 1897, the ministry of communication and culture said, with several stops en route to accommodate ceremonies to mark the occasion.

Descendants and historians say the return of Toera's skull carries both political and cultural significance and will allow the Sakalava people to carry out the Fitampoha, a traditional ritual of purification and blessing that requires the presence of ancestral royal relics.

(Reuters)



▲ A Madagascar soldier and a gendarme carry three colonial-era skulls, presumed to belong to King Toera and two others from the Sakalava ethnic group.



▲ Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, Narend Singh, and Vietnam's Ambassador to South Africa, Hoang Sy Cuong, toast 80 years of independence for Vietnam.

South Africa honours Vietnam's 80th independence anniversary with a toast

IN celebration of 80 years of the independence of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the South African government on Tuesday raised a glass to toast the eight decades of freedom with this country.

In celebrating this milestone in South Africa, Ambassador Hoang Sy Cuong, who is based in Pretoria, hosted ambassadors and other dignitaries.

South Africa was represented by Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, Narend Singh.

Eighty years ago, in 1945, the Vietnamese leader, President Ho Chi Minh, delivered the Declaration of Independence, giving birth to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

"This was the culmination of a century-long struggle for sovereignty and the powerful expression of our people's unyielding will to be masters of their own destiny. The path we have traveled over these past eight decades has been one of extraordinary trials and remarkable triumphs," Ambassador Hoang Sy Cuong said.

He reflected on the Vietnamese people

who endured immense sacrifices to defend their sovereignty and achieve national reunification. The challenges were monumental, leaving their nation scarred by war, impoverished, and facing economic isolation. "From the ashes of war, we began to rebuild the country," he said.

In 1986, Vietnam initiated the policy of renewal, which was a pivotal moment of transformation to build a socialist-oriented market economy, to open its doors to the world.

Ambassador Hoang Sy Cuong said that from a low-income, war-torn country, Vietnam has emerged as one of the most dynamic economies in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Today, Vietnam is an active and responsible member of the international community, deeply integrated into the global economy. Our foreign policy is steadfastly guided by the principles of independence, self-reliance, peace, friendship, cooperation, and development."

The ambassador added that this 80th anniversary is a powerful milestone and a testament to the resilience and humility of the Vietnamese people.

(Reuters)

CHINA'S President Xi Jinping convened his Russian and North Korean counterparts in Beijing for the first time on Tuesday, a show of solidarity with countries shunned by the West over their role in Europe's worst war in 80 years.

Xi hosted Vladimir Putin for talks at the Great Hall of the People and then at his personal residence, calling him his "old friend".

A few hours later, Kim Jong Un's armoured train was spotted by a Reuters witness arriving in the Chinese capital. North Korean state media confirmed Kim's arrival, showing his daughter Kim Ju Ae accompanying him.

Ju Ae, whom South Korean intelligence consider her father's most likely successor, is making her international debut after years of being seen next to Kim at major domestic events.

Xi, Putin and Kim are set to take centre stage at a massive military parade on Wednesday, where the Chinese president will flaunt his vision for a new global order as U.S. President Donald Trump's "America First" policies strain Western alliances.

Beyond the pomp, analysts are watching whether the trio may signal closer defence relations following a pact signed by Russia and North Korea in June 2024, and a similar alliance between Beijing and Pyongyang, an outcome that may alter the military calculus in the Asia-Pacific region.

It would also be a blow for Trump, who has talked up his close relations with all three leaders and touted his peacemaking credentials as Russia's three-and-a-half-year war with Ukraine has raged on.

In a thinly veiled swipe at this rival across the Pacific Ocean on Monday, Xi told a summit of more than 20 leaders of non-Western countries: "We must continue to take a clear stand against hegemonism and power politics."

Xi also held talks on Monday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, whose country has been targeted by Trump over its purchases of Russian oil seen as helping finance Putin's war effort.

Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent

North Korea's Kim Jong Un heads to Beijing by train to attend parade

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un crossed the border into China on his special train early on Tuesday to attend China's celebration of the formal surrender of Japan in World War Two, North Korean state media said on Tuesday.

Kim left Pyongyang for China on Monday and crossed into China early Tuesday morning, North Korea's state newspaper Rodong Sinmun said, en route to the largest multilateral diplomatic event he has ever been to.

Kim is expected to attend the military parade in Beijing on Wednesday, joining Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Rodong Sinmun published photographs of Kim and his entourage, including Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui, who has been involved in Pyongyang's diplomacy on weapons developments for more than two decades.

In one photograph, Kim can be seen standing next to the dark green train with a cigarette in his hand.

In another, he is seated at a desk inside the train with a North Korean flag behind him and with a closed laptop computer in a carriage ornately furnished with wood paneling.

The train appeared to be similar to the bulletproof train he has used before to travel to other countries.



Xi hosts 'old friend' Putin, Kim ahead of military parade in challenge to West

called the summit "performative" and accused China and India, the biggest buyers of Russian crude, of being "bad actors" by fueling Russia's war.

As Putin and Xi met, Russia's Gazprom (GAZP.MM), opens new tab and China National Petroleum Corporation signed a deal to increase gas supplies and penned an agreement on a new pipeline that could supply China for 30 years.

At a time when Trump has set his sights on a Nobel Peace Prize, any new concentration of military power in the East that includes Russia will ring alarm bells for the West.

"Trilateral military exercises between Russia, China and North Korea seem nearly inevitable," wrote Youngjun Kim, an analyst at the U.S.-based National Bureau of Asian Research, in March, citing how the conflict in Ukraine had pushed Moscow and Pyongyang closer.

"Until a few years ago, China and Russia

were important partners in imposing international sanctions on North Korea for its nuclear and missile tests... (they) are now potential military partners of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during a crisis on the Korean peninsula," he added, using the diplomatically isolated country's official name.

The North Korean leader has supplied more than 15,000 troops to support Putin's war in Ukraine.

In 2024, he also hosted the Russian leader in Pyongyang - the first summit of its kind in 24 years - in a move widely interpreted as a snub to Xi and an attempt to ease his pariah status by reducing North Korea's dependence on China.

About 600 North Korean soldiers have been killed fighting for Russia in the Kursk region, according to South Korea's intelligence agency, which believes Pyongyang is planning another deployment.

Putin also told the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin that a "fair balance in the security sphere" must be restored, shorthand for Russia's criticism of the eastward expansion of NATO.

For Kim, the parade will mark the largest multilateral diplomatic event he has ever attended, offering the reclusive young leader an opportunity to gain implicit support for his banned nuclear weapons, and expand his diplomatic circle.

Before crossing to China early on Tuesday, Kim visited a missile laboratory.

The visit was geared towards "showing off (North Korea's) status as a nuclear power" just before "standing alongside Xi and Putin, which is intended to suggest support for North Korea as a nuclear state," said Hong Min, North Korea analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification.

(Reuters)



▲ North Korean leader Kim Jong Un travels by train as he leaves Pyongyang to attend China's celebration of the formal surrender of Japan in World War Two.

Before crossing into China, Kim on Monday visited a missile laboratory that is researching carbon fibre composite materials

to be used in engines for intercontinental ballistic missiles, state media KCNA said.

Kim's visit to a missile laboratory just

ahead of the multilateral summit appeared highly symbolic, experts said.

The visit is geared toward "showing off (North Korea's) status as a nuclear power" just before "standing alongside Xi and Putin, which is intended to suggest support for North Korea as a nuclear state," said Hong Min, North Korea analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification.

Hong said it also sent a message to the U.S. about North Korea's "will to advance nuclear weapons and the status of a nuclear power that is difficult to reverse."

governance, adding that cooperation between North Korea and China will grow to pursue such a value, according to a vice foreign minister in comments posted on the North Korean foreign ministry's website.

Xi on Monday pressed his vision for a new global security and economic order that prioritises the "Global South", in a direct challenge to the United States, during a summit that included the leaders of Russia and India.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, who has been seeking to improve ties with Pyongyang, was receiving real-time reports about Kim's trip to China, the presidential office said. Seoul is sending National Assembly speaker Woo Won-shik to Beijing, but the country's Unification Ministry said it was unsure whether he would be able to hold bilateral talks with the North Korean leader on the sidelines of the event.

(Reuters)

SA’s DJ Mördä headlines Eswatini Farmers Market

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

THE Eswatini Farmers Market is set to return with a spectacular lineup and vibrant cultural festivities, headlined by South African producer and DJ, Mördä.

Known offstage as Robert Bongani Mohosana, Mördä rose to fame in 2009 as part of the iconic South African DJ duo Black Motion, earning acclaim for his dynamic beats and electrifying performances. His presence at this year’s market promises to elevate the event to new heights.

Scheduled for October 11, 2025, at Malkerns Country Club, the Eswatini Farmers Market has become a beloved annual celebration of culture, community, and creativity. It offers a unique platform where music, food, and local crafts converge, fostering a spirit of unity and pride among Eswatini’s people. The festival’s director, Mbekezeli ‘Culolam’ Dlamini, shared his enthusiasm in an exclusive interview, describing this year’s edition as poised to “surpass all expectations” with “endless excitement and unforgettable moments.”

General admission tickets are available at E250, encouraging early purchase to avoid missing out on the festivities. Dlamini emphasised the importance of community involvement, urging locals to secure their spots promptly. “This is for us Eswatini,” he said, highlighting the festival’s role in strengthening communal bonds.

The Eswatini Farmers Market is much more than a marketplace; it is a cultural phenomenon that celebrates the nation’s rich heritage through a vibrant mix of activities. Attendees can look forward to a diverse array of live music performances featuring local artists, showcasing the depth and variety of Eswatini’s musical talent.



▲ DJ Mördä.

Families will also enjoy a range of games and activities designed to engage children, ensuring the event is inclusive and fun for all ages. Dlamini stressed the festival’s commitment to growth and innovation,

noting that each year brings new ideas aimed at creating a legacy. “We aim to make the festival bigger and better, bringing in new ideas that will leave a lasting legacy and uniqueness for each year,” he remarked.

Sbu Noah praises Eswatini vocalists

ACCLAIMED South African gospel artist, Sbu Noah recently expressed heartfelt admiration for the backing vocalists from Eswatini, calling them “my people” after a memorable performance in Manzini.

The event, held at a secret location last weekend around Manzini, showcased not only Sbu Noah’s powerful vocals but also the exceptional talent of the local vocalists who accompanied him. Taking to social media shortly after the performance, Sbu Noah couldn’t contain his enthusiasm for the Eswatini backing vocalists.

“Okay, remind me never to bring backing vocalists in Eswatini, because WOW!!! My people these ones,” he wrote, highlighting the impressive skills and synergy he experienced on stage. This spontaneous praise resonated deeply with fans, many of whom expressed regret at not being informed about the concert in advance.

The comment section quickly filled with disappointed fans lamenting the secrecy of the event. “Next time let us know you’re coming, we missed a lot, they didn’t tell us. I wonder why they did not tell us,” wrote

Gcebile Maseko, echoing the sentiments of many who wished they had witnessed the live performance.

Sbu Noah, whose full name is Sibusiso ‘Sbu Noah’ Mthembu, has carved out a distinguished career as a gospel singer, songwriter, and television personality. He first rose to national prominence as a member of the celebrated South African gospel choir Joyous Celebration. His breakthrough came with the hit track ‘Hallelujah Nkateko,’ which cemented his status as a leading voice in gospel music. Over the years, he has contributed to numerous hits with the choir, including ‘Wenzile,’ ‘Ngino Jesu,’ ‘Sewakhile,’ and ‘Ngiphephile Umoya Wenkosi.’

Sbu Noah’s journey into music began in his local church choir, where his passion for gospel music was nurtured. His talent and dedication led him to audition for various groups, eventually catching the attention of Lindelani Mkhize, who introduced him to Joyous Celebration in 2012. Since joining the choir, Sbu has performed at numerous high-profile concerts across South Africa, gaining a loyal following.



▲ Sbu Noah.



▲ DJ Crooks.

Crooks added to Mlawula Campfire Festival

THE Mlawula Campfire Festival is gearing up for its sixth spectacular edition and has now revealed Eswatini DJ Crooks as an act.

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. Notably, the event has also confirmed Eswatini’s DJ Obsession and South African Supta and Sol Phenduka.

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.

Diverse

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.

Emagagu sign major deal with SA's Hope Creative Concepts

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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AFRO-pop trio Emagagu from Eswatini has taken a major leap in their musical journey by signing a strategic partnership with Hope Creative Concepts, a prominent subsidiary of the Hope Family Group based in South Africa.

This collaboration is poised to elevate the group's presence not only within Eswatini and South Africa but across the broader Southern African region and beyond. Emagagu, celebrated for their infectious Afro-pop rhythms and heartfelt lyrics, has steadily built a loyal fan base with hits such as "Umtsimba Wemzala," "Dukanezwe," and "Usuku Lwethu."

Their music resonates deeply with audiences, blending traditional and contemporary sounds to create a unique and authentic African musical experience. The partnership with Hope Creative Concepts marks a new chapter, providing the trio with access to enhanced resources, strategic management, and expanded platforms that will amplify their reach.

Hope Creative Concepts, formerly My Diary Concepts, has a strong track record of nurturing African talent and propelling artists onto larger stages. A spokesperson from the company emphasised the significance of this alliance: "Emagagu represents the vibrant and evolving sound of African music. This partnership is about nurturing their talent and bringing their music to bigger stages, not just in Eswatini and South Africa, but across the continent." This statement underscores the company's commitment to supporting Emagagu's artistic growth while preserving the authentic sound that defines their identity.

For Emagagu, this deal is more than just a



▲ Emagagu.

business arrangement; it catalyses creative expansion and professional development. In an exclusive interview, the trio expressed their enthusiasm about the partnership, highlighting how it will allow them to focus more on the creative aspects of their craft.

"This is a significant step in our career because we have always wanted to have a team or someone who will take care of the business side of this project. The collaboration will help Emagagu to grow as a brand and connect with a wider audience. It will also help us to be more creative since

we will be focusing more on studio-related work rather than stressing about roll-out plans and getting gigs," they shared.

This new phase promises a wealth of exciting developments for fans and the Afro-pop community alike. With the backing of Hope Creative Concepts, Emagagu is set to release new projects that will showcase their evolving sound and storytelling prowess. Live performances, exclusive content, and innovative collaborations are also on the horizon, offering fans fresh ways to engage with the group's music.



▲ Uncle Waffles.

'Zenzele' music video garners 10 million views

TALENTED Eswatini-born superstar Uncle Waffles has officially dropped the much-anticipated music video for her latest single, 'Zenzele,' and has since gained positive reviews.

The release has already made waves, amassing over 10 million views on YouTube within just 2 months, a testament to her growing influence and popularity in the music industry. 'Zenzele' is an explosive offering that not only shows Uncle Waffles' signature sound but also reunites several artists featured in her earlier tracks, including Uncool MC, Royal Musiq, and Cow Boi.

The addition of Xouppy to this collaborative effort brings a fresh dynamic to the song, further enhancing its appeal. Since its debut, 'Zenzele' has quickly become a social media sensation, particularly on TikTok, where dance challenges inspired by the track have taken off, inviting fans and followers to showcase their moves and creativity. The release of 'Zenzele' visuals comes at a pivotal moment in Uncle Waffles' career, as she continues to break barriers and redefine the Amapiano genre.

Prominence

Lungelihle Zwane, known to fans as Uncle Waffles, has rapidly ascended to prominence in the global music scene, particularly within the Amapiano genre. Her infectious rhythms, captivating performances, and unique style have earned her the title of the "Princess of Amapiano" by Billboard, a recognition that underscores her impact on the genre and the music industry at large.

Uncle Waffles' journey to stardom has been nothing short of remarkable. She has garnered recognition from major media outlets, including Rolling Stone, Forbes, CNN, Variety, The New York Times, and Complex UK. These accolades highlight her impressive achievements, including the successful releases of her highly acclaimed EPs, 'Solace' and 'Asylum,' both of which have received widespread praise for their innovative sound and production quality.

Her performances at prestigious events like Coachella and sold-out shows in New York and the UK have further solidified her status as a leading figure in the music scene. Fans have been captivated by her electrifying stage presence and the ability to connect with audiences through her music, making her a sought-after performer worldwide.

Mbalenhle celebrated among Africa's Top 100 women achievers

THE remarkable power and resilience of African women took centre stage recently as Eswatini's Mbalenhle Manana was honoured among 100 of the continent's most influential female achievers at the prestigious She Reigns Africa Network Summit and African Women Achievers Award 2025.

This landmark event celebrated women who have broken barriers, led industries, and inspired communities across Africa, highlighting their extraordinary contributions to society. Founded by Natasha Mncube, a passionate advocate for women's empowerment, the summit brought together trailblazers from diverse sectors to share their journeys, challenges, and visions for the future. Mncube, who also serves as the Director of the Shining Stars Foundation and Southern Africa Brand Ambassador for the Zikomo Africa Awards, created this platform to amplify women's voices and foster a supportive network that encourages growth and leadership.

Among the honoured was Mbalenhle Manana, a pioneering figure in Eswatini's fashion industry and the driving force behind the country's leading model agency. Her recognition at the summit underscores her role as a transformative leader who has

not only elevated the fashion scene but also empowered countless young women to pursue their dreams with confidence. Reflecting on the experience, Manana described the event as "the best I've ever attended," highlighting the summit's focus on "Super Women, Power Houses, trailblazers, and industry leaders" who engage deeply with issues affecting women across Africa.

Powerful

The summit went beyond mere celebration; it was a powerful forum for connection and transformation. Women founders and leaders gathered to discuss shared struggles, exchange ideas, and celebrate their collective achievements. Manana emphasised the unique atmosphere of solidarity and empowerment, where participants could openly address challenges and inspire one another. "We learned that as women, we must rise above and let our scars become the stars that guide others," she said. "Transform your pain into purpose and unleash your inner strength and resilience."

Central to the summit's message was the call for women to be "unbroken, unshakable, and unstoppable." This mantra resonated deeply with attendees, many of whom have faced adversity ranging from



▲ Mbalenhle Manana.

societal barriers and abuse to doubt and missed opportunities simply because of their gender. Manana reflected on this shared experience, reminding women that "our circumstances, background, or past don't define our worth." Instead, she urged embracing the present and future with hope and determination: "Our tomorrow is brighter; it holds promises and renewed hope. Yesterday was a lesson; today is a gift, embrace its beauty."

‘I am worried about the kids!’

... Cyan Boujee had concerns about promoting Russian programme as early as July

CONTROVERSIAL influencer Cyan Boujee has revealed more details about the Russian Alabuga Start programme that she promoted on her social media accounts, revealing that she had concerns about the treatment of the young women on the programme as early as July.

The influencer, whose real name is Honour Zuma, was among a group of influencers including the likes of Munaka, Zille and Seemah, amongst others, who have faced sharp criticism for promoting the programme as unproven claims of human trafficking were made on social media.

Some of the influencers have had their social media accounts - which have millions of followers, banned as a result of mass reporting by members of the public.

On Monday, some of the influencers along with Siya Mhlungu, one of the agencies who facilitated the social media campaign, took part in a two hour tell-all on MacG’s Podcast and Chill vodcast, addressing the recent controversy.

They all said they saw no evidence of any human trafficking, while Mhlungu expressed that the Russian Embassy and the South African Government had both expressed there was no evidence of human trafficking.

Mhlungu said his agency’s assessment of the issue was that some members of the public were using the saga as an instrument to settle personal scores against some of the influencers, pointing to the material facts that no one cared for the official



▲Cyan Boujee reveals concerns over Russian Alababuga Start programme.

responses from the South African and Russian governments on the issue, while also questioning who the alleged trafficked individuals were.

In recent days the programme has gone viral due to its alleged vagueness and

has been alleged by netizens of being a human trafficking scheme. This has been vehemently denied by one of the social media agencies responsible for it, as well as the governments, who said there was no evidence of the human trafficking claims.

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In a video posted on social media on Monday, Cyan Boujee has admitted to spotting some “red flags” when she was in Tatarstan, Russia. She shared how she had communicated her concerns to a PR Manager responsible for the campaign, but despite having concerns, she still went on to post about the campaign, encouraging young women to take part in the programme.

“I said to myself, ‘let me just act like a villain’. Am I regretting it... Of course. I will never sell any woman intentionally. I’m going to say some dodgy stuff I figured from this programme,” she said, revealing a voice note she sent to a manager on July 27, complaining about her experience in Russia.

(IOL)

Final season of ‘Shaka iLembe’ in production: Here’s what to expect

MULTICHOICE has confirmed that production is underway for the third and final season of the hit drama, *Shaka iLembe*.

The series, produced by Bomb! Productions, will premiere on Mzansi Magic in 2026. Executive producer Desiree Markgraaff said the concluding season would bring the epic saga to a fitting close.

“With Season 3, we expand the universe of kings and queens, warriors, healers and leaders with a vision to reinvent an entire culture and establish a legacy that endures more than three centuries later,” she said.

The final chapter will see Shaka’s campaign against the Mpondo intensify, while

Queen Nandi hides a devastating secret. Francis Fynn and the British arrive at Port Natal, marking the first steps of colonial expansion into the Zulu kingdom.

Nomzamo Mbatha, who continues as both executive producer and Queen Nandi, described the series as the project of her career.

“This third season is the culmination of a world that African viewers have found deep love and admiration for,” she said.

“It builds on the legacy of African television while taking audiences on a journey from an all-conquering reign, to sweeping love stories, to the founding of another nation and the arrival of colonists.”

(The Citizen)



▲Shaka iLembe.



▲Tyla and Granny.

Tyla pays heartfelt tribute to her late grandmother

IN a deeply personal post, the South African singer honoured the woman she describes as her greatest inspiration, thanking her for the love, wisdom, and cultural grounding that shaped her artistry.

On Monday, 1 September 2025, Tyla took to Instagram to confirm the loss of her beloved grandmother.

The Water hitmaker, known for blending amapiano with global pop sounds, posted a tender photograph alongside a message of gratitude: “I thank God for your presence in my life. Thank you for all the love and all the stories you would tell me. Your presence will forever be missed. The sweetest soul.”

Beyond the glitz of international stages, Tyla has always spoken about the quiet power her grandmother held in her life. It was this figure who encouraged her to sing, often making her repeat melodies until her voice reached perfec-

tion.

What may have seemed like strictness at the time later became one of the strongest foundations of her musical career.

Her grandmother also instilled in her a source of pride for her Zulu heritage, reminding her to carry her roots even as she soared into global superstardom. These lessons of resilience, discipline, and identity now echo through her music.

The news struck a chord with fans, who flooded social media with messages of comfort. Many acknowledged that the woman she mourns is also the woman who, in many ways, helped gift the world her voice. This loss highlights a universal truth: behind every public figure is a private circle of love and sacrifices that shapes them. Her heartfelt tribute is a reminder of the elders who anchor families, pass down traditions, and quietly weave strength into future generations. (The Citizen)



Drinking Water to Lose Weight: What's the Idea?

YOU'VE probably heard many of the ways water is good for you – it helps move waste out of your body, helps your cells work the way they should, lubricates and cushions joints, and much more. Water keeps you alive and kicking.

But drinking water may also help you reach your weight loss goals. The reasons are many, but what it boils down to is this: The better hydrated you are, the better your body's systems function. And that includes the systems involved in weight maintenance.

Does Water Boost Your Metabolism?

Your metabolism is all the chemical reactions that happen in your body to keep you alive. "High" metabolism means your body burns calories quickly, and "low" metabolism means it burns them more slowly. Doctors call this your metabolic rate.

How much water you drink has a direct impact on your metabolism. Water is a critical part of your body's enzyme activities and biochemical reactions, including:

- Glycolysis, or the breaking down of glucose for energy
- Beta-oxidation, which is the burning of fat
- Protein synthesis, the process where cells make protein

Certain organs that play a part in metabolism need water to work well, including your liver and kidneys.

"If you're dehydrated, the body may shift more metabolic burden to the liver, reducing its ability to burn fat," says Caroline Susie, RDN, LD, a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Does drinking water burn calories?

Calories are a measure of energy. You take in calories through food, and that powers your body. The number of calories you take in has an effect on your weight. If the calories you use each day as you move and function are about the same as the calories you take in, your weight should stay about the same. This is because your body stores extra calories as fat.

Water itself has zero calories and doesn't give you energy, but it does play a role in how your body uses calories.

Is it possible that the simple act of gulping down your H₂O could burn calories? To a small extent, yes, says Susie. It's a process called water-induced thermogenesis.

And you may get an even greater effect if the water you drink is cold. Your body uses energy to make the fluids you drink warm up to body temperature, and the more energy that takes, the faster your metabolism.

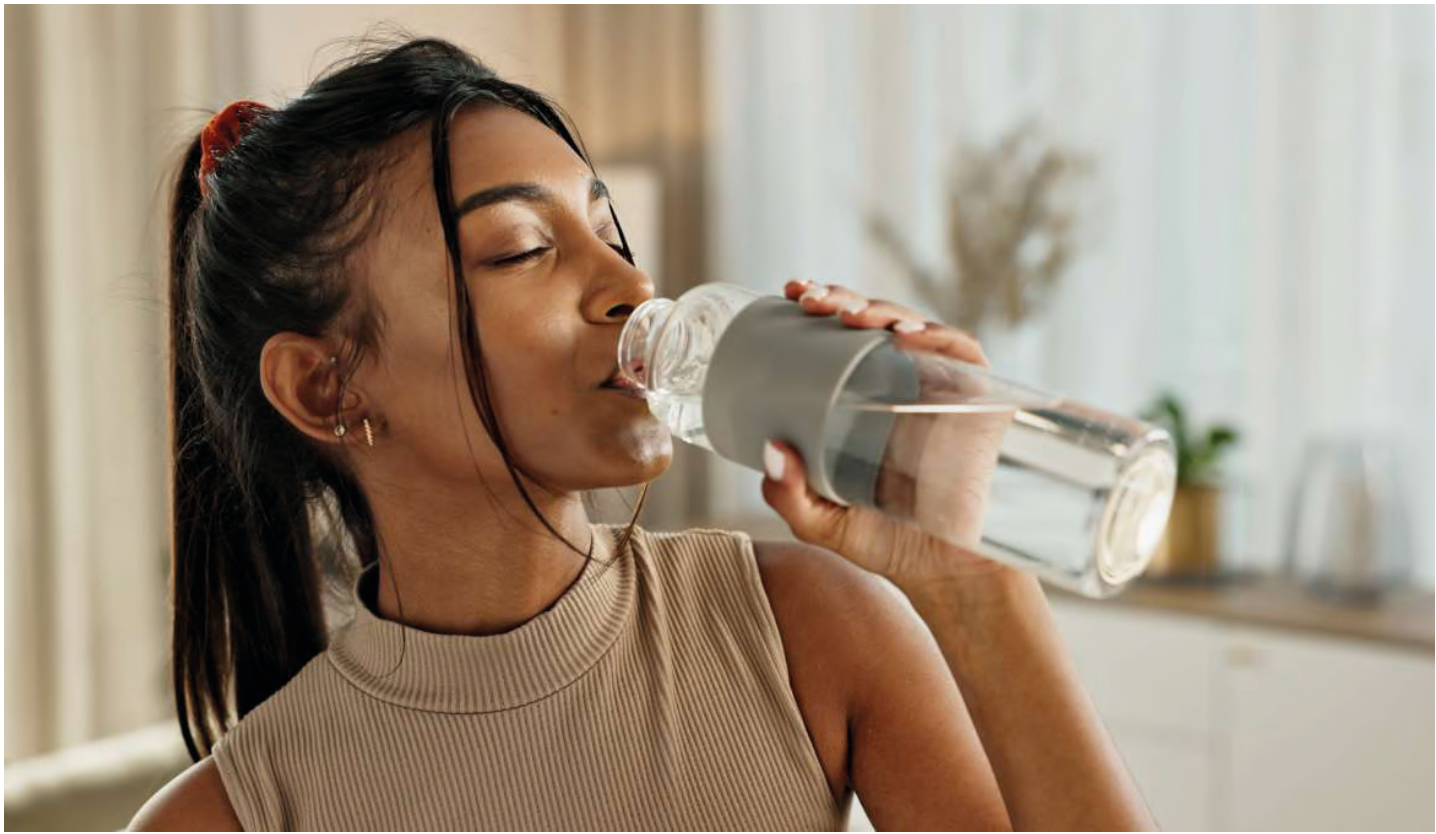
"[A study] found that drinking 500 mL – or about 17 ounces – of water increased metabolic rate by approximately 30% in healthy men and women," Susie says.

Researchers clocked the start of the effect about 10 minutes after the people in the study drank their water, and things peaked around 20 to 30 minutes later. The result? About 24 kilocalories burned.

Does drinking water burn fat?

Drinking water itself isn't going to burn belly fat. But staying hydrated plays an

Does drinking water help you lose weight?



indirect part in fat loss because it supports certain systems in the body.

"Adequate hydration is essential for lipolysis, the breakdown of fat," says Susie. "The first step in fat metabolism is hydrolysis, which literally requires water. Staying well-hydrated also ensures efficient functioning of the liver and kidneys, which are involved in metabolizing stored fat."

Drinking Water Before Meals

When it comes to weight management and water, timing may also matter. Drinking water before meals will tend to both reduce

your hunger and have modest weight loss benefits, says Marschall Runge, MD, PhD, executive vice president for medical affairs and CEO of Michigan Medicine and dean of the University of Michigan Medical School.

"If you drink [about 17 ounces] half an hour before meals, there are studies that show modest weight loss and much better weight control," he says. "Your stomach expands, and that changes the hormones that we all have that signal our need to eat."

In other words, filling your belly with water makes you feel fuller before you eat, and you tend to eat less as a result.

How Much Water Should I Drink to Lose Weight?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer to the "correct" amount of water you need to drink a day for optimal health. Your water needs vary by your size, age, medical conditions, activity level, and other things.

"The general recommendation is to drink 2 to 3 liters a day – that's about 10 cups of water a day, 10 eight-ounce cups," says Runge. "People who do that tend to have less trouble with overeating and tend to feel better."

Talk to your doctor about how much

water you should be getting daily to meet your health and weight loss needs.

Other Benefits of Water for Weight Loss

Water can also influence weight loss indirectly. Drinking enough water helps with:

► **Appetite control.** It’s common to mistake thirst for hunger and eat when what your body really needs is water.

► **Energy levels.** Even mild dehydration can cause fatigue, leading to lower physical activity. This affects your overall energy level use.

► **Sleep quality.** When you’re hydrated, you sleep better. Dehydration messes with your sleep-wake cycle and reduces the amount of time you’re asleep. Studies show that sleep deprivation disrupts your metabolism, increases your hunger hormones, and makes you less likely to exercise.

► **Better digestion.** Water helps break down your food, soften your stool, and prevent constipation so the foods you eat digest well.

The Importance of Water and GLP Drugs

If you’re taking GLP-1 receptor agonists like semaglutide (Ozempic, Wegovy) or tirzepatide (Mounjaro, Zepbound) – especially for weight loss – staying well-hydrated becomes even more important, says Susie.

“These medications can increase your risk of dehydration due to both side effects and reduced appetite, which can cause people to unintentionally drink too little water,” she says.

Another positive about staying well-hydrated while taking GLP-1 receptor agonists is that it makes you less likely to get constipated, which is another common complaint from people who take the drugs, says Runge.

“Part of what those meds do is they slow the progression of food through your stomach and through your digestive tract,” he says.

Some of the other common side effects of GLP-1 receptor agonist drugs that can lead to dehydration include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Decreased appetite or thirst

If you’re not intentional about your water intake, even mild symptoms can dehydrate you, so it’s important to make it a priority, says Susie.

Takeaways

Drinking enough water helps your body work better, and that includes improving the processes that burn calories and fat. Drinking water, especially cold water, can slightly boost your metabolism and help you burn a few extra calories. Drinking water before meals can make you feel fuller, so you might eat less and lose weight more easily. Staying hydrated also helps you control your appetite, improve your energy and sleep, and support your digestion. If you’re using certain weight loss medications like GLP-1 drugs, drinking plenty of water is extra important to avoid dehydration and related side effects. **WebMD**



How grief can affect your health

Sleep Problems

GRIEF can keep you from getting the regular sleep your mind and body need.

You might have trouble going to sleep, or you might wake up often in the night or even sleep too much. Good sleep habits can help. Wind down slowly before bed with something calm like a bath, a book, or breathing exercises, and go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.

Fatigue

The emotional toll of grief can drain your energy. To keep up your strength, be sure to eat enough, even if you don’t feel like it. And exercise -- something as simple as a short walk can really help. It’s also good to stay connected with family and friends. And a mental health professional or a support group may be able to give you a sense of connection, along with tools to help you through your grief.

Immune System

There’s some evidence that grief can take a toll on your body’s ability to fight illness and infection, especially if it goes on for a long time. Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional if you’re having trouble coming to terms with your loss.

Inflammation

This happens when your immune system responds to something it sees as a threat and makes tissues in your body swell. It can play a role in heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, asthma, and possibly cancer. There’s evidence that grief is linked to inflammation, and some studies show the more severe the grief, the more serious the inflammation. Exercise and eating right can help you manage it.

Anxiety

The events that cause grief can make you feel like you don’t have control over your life. You might be concerned about your financial future or being alone or the possibility of losing someone else. Some worry is normal, but if your anxiety lasts longer than a few months or gets in the way of your normal work or home life, it may be



time to talk to a mental health professional.

Cortisol

This is sometimes called the “stress hormone,” and your body may release more of it than usual into your bloodstream in the 6 months after the loss of a loved one. High levels of cortisol over a long period can raise your chances of heart disease or high blood pressure.

Digestion

Grief can lead you to stop eating on a regular schedule or to binge eat. And stress hormones can make you nauseous or bother your stomach and the rest of your digestive tract. You might have stomach cramps, diarrhea, constipation, ulcers, and even irritable bowel syndrome. If you have stomach issues that won’t go away, your doctor can help you find ways to treat them.

Aches and Pains

Grief may make you more likely to have joint pain, back pain, or headaches. Part of the reason could be the muscle tension caused by the stress hormones your body releases in response to grief. This should get better over time, but talk to your doctor about how to manage the pain if it doesn’t go away.

Heart Rate

Serious grief can keep your pulse high for as long as 6 months. This faster rate, which could be caused by anxiety or the release of cortisol, might your chances of heart problems. Talk to your doctor about adding or changing your medication, especially if you already have heart issues.

Broken Heart Syndrome

The sudden loss of a spouse or loved one can cause a jolt of intense emotion and trigger hormones that lead to sharp chest pain and trouble breathing. Your heart may not pump blood as well for a while. It can feel like a heart attack, but it usually doesn’t damage your heart or block your arteries. Most people get better within a few days or weeks.

Higher Heart Attack Risk

In the first day of grief over the loss of someone close, your chances of having a heart attack are higher than normal. They go down over the course of the first week, but your odds may stay higher than usual for the first month. Try to get enough sleep, and watch for signs of heart attack like chest and stomach pain, cold sweats, nausea, and dizziness. **WebMD**

News in pictures



▲ North Korean leader Kim Jong Un travels by train as he leaves Pyongyang to attend China's celebration of the formal surrender of Japan in World War Two.



▲ A young military cadet does pull-ups after a ceremony to mark the start of the new school year in Kyiv, Ukraine.



▲ Cast members Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt pose on the red carpet during arrivals for the screening "The Smashing Machine" in competition at the Venice Film Festival.



▲ Protesters carry items to be burned outside the regional parliament building during a protest against the government's spending priorities, such as enhanced perks for lawmakers, in Bandung, West Java province, Indonesia.



▲ Tango dancers Juan Fernando Cabral and Laura Castineiras compete in the salon category of Tango World Championship final, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Being a champion is not always about lifting a trophy

AS South Africa gears up for crucial Fifa World Cup qualifiers against Lesotho and Nigeria, the Betway Premiership pauses, giving clubs a chance to reset and reassess their seasons.

Mamelodi Sundowns, standard-bearers of South African football both on the continent and the global stage, enter the break in third place. Many of Bafana Bafana's recent successes have come through their key players, underlining just how influential the club has become.

For coach Miguel Cardoso, the pause is well-timed. His side has been among the busiest in Africa, juggling domestic and continental commitments, and he now has the chance to fine-tune after what has been a relatively slow start by their lofty standards.

The Portuguese coach has openly voiced concerns about the relentless schedule and its toll on his players. Fatigue has been a recurring issue, while dropped points — four in their first five league games — have added to the scrutiny.

Tensions escalated following a dramatic MTN8 semi-final exit at the Lucas Moripe Stadium, where Sundowns lost 4-1 on penalties to Orlando Pirates after their 2-2 aggregate score over two legs.

The result sparked unrest among sections of the fan base, with calls for Cardoso's departure growing louder. In response, he has strongly defended both himself and his team.

Encouragement, however, came with a



▲ *Mamelodi Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso.* narrow 1-0 victory over Stellenbosch FC just before the break. Still, the pressure remains. Cardoso insists, though, that his experience in South Africa has been overwhelmingly positive.

"My experience in South Africa has been exciting," Cardoso commented.

"It has been absolutely amazing to be among the people; I have said that from the beginning. Every time my family comes they feel excited to be here.

"That is why I was caught by surprise the last two weeks and the last few days, because that is not the South Africa I found. I also

think the example is not the generality, because when I go to the streets I keep receiving love and respect with warm words.

"That is not only the spirit of South Africans but the true fans of Mamelodi Sundowns and what the family has brought to the club."

Cardoso, a former Esperance de Tunis coach, led Sundowns to their eighth consecutive league title and to the CAF Champions League final losing to first time champions Pyramids FC by 3-2 on aggregate over two legs.

Although they fell short of lifting the con-

tinental crown, he maintains it was still a significant achievement, arguing that some of the criticism has been unfair.

"Having the chance to collect the hearts of people around us and the team highlights the values of the club, we still produce results, because we were champions and we broke almost all the records.

"We took the team to the Champions League final after ten years. What is strange is that every time people speak about the Champions League, it sounds like we lost everything and it was disastrous.

"When they speak negatively they will add the Champions League, another negative thing, the Club World Cup on the side of Miguel Cardoso."

Referencing Stellenbosch coach Steve Barker's recent CAF Confederation Cup run, Cardoso broadened the idea of what success means.

"Me and the coach are winners, he is a winner because he made the semi-finals of the Conference League, but he lost in the semi-finals. But he's a winner, because it's not always that the ones that are second or third are losers.

"Getting to a final of the Champions League is a long journey, but losing a final doesn't make you a loser. It's absolutely ridiculous to interpret it like that. Going to the Club World Cup and playing so well and getting four points against the best clubs in the world doesn't make you a loser.

(Supersport)

Manchester City's woes might be mental, suggests Doku

MANCHESTER City need to show more mental fortitude after losing their last two Premier League matches, the club's winger Jeremy Doku suggested on Tuesday at the start of preparations for Belgium's two World Cup qualifiers this week.

"Things aren't going very well," the Belgian international admitted when asked about City's fortunes at a press conference ahead of Belgium's game at Liechtenstein on Thursday.

Manchester City have three points from their opening three games of the new Premier League campaign.

After defeating Wolverhampton Wanderers in their opening match, they were beaten by Tottenham Hotspur and Brighton & Hove Albion in their next two fixtures.

"After the first match, everyone felt good, but after that, things got more difficult. I think we're letting our heads drop a bit too much when we concede a goal. Mentally, we need to be stronger," Doku told reporters.

It could be that Manchester City did not have a decent break, having competed at the Club World Cup in the United States in June.

"I only started training again on 28 July. We barely had any pre-season. The last time I had six weeks of pre-season was at Anderlecht. That was five years ago.

"But we're not the only ones in this situation; it applies to many other clubs."

The Belgian winger was dropped from the starting line up after playing against Wolves on 16 August.

"Personally, I haven't started the season very well. I'm not in my best form yet. You



▲ *winger Jeremy Doku.*

haven't seen Jeremy at his best yet, but he'll come soon. That's why it's important to be here with the Red Devils and gain some confidence," he said of the World Cup assignments, which also include a home game against Kazakhstan on Sunday.

In the Belgium squad, Doku is reunited with former clubmate Kevin De Bruyne, who left City at the end of the last campaign and has since signed for Napoli.

"It was a bit strange because I used to see him every day. It took some getting used to when he was gone.

"But it's always good to play and train with Kevin. And soon we'll see each other as opponents in the Champions League, of course.(Supersport)

All Blacks see opportunity in Bok defensive frailties

THE All Blacks know what's coming, and little that the Springboks will do at Eden Park on Saturday will come as a surprise to them.

They also sense an opportunity in the Boks' failing defence, which was exposed by Australia in the two tests at the start of the Castle Lager Rugby Championship.

That's the view of All Black attack coach Scott Hansen, who believes the All Blacks will have the measure of the Springboks and keep their incredible record of being unbeaten at Eden Park since 1994 alive.

The Boks have a four game winning streak over their greatest rivals, but that all means nothing come Saturday.

OPPORTUNITY AGAINST RUSH DEFENCE

Hansen believes the frailties the Boks

have shown up in defence have been noticed, and the All Blacks sense an opportunity there.

"Yeah, I think so. And every team looking at South Africa will see there's opportunities. Where they're world class is they look like they're there, then all of a sudden they're not. So, it's again how we adjust to it. We've got our planning and prep around opportunities we feel that will be there, but also understanding the adjustments that we feel they will make also," Hansen said.

The assistant coach added that he believes they know what to prepare for and there shouldn't be too many surprises this weekend.

"We know what they're about. They're direct, they're physical and they go to the air. So, we know what's coming," Hansen added. (Supersport)



▲ *Scott Hansen.*

Liverpool's record £125m signing Alexander Isak wants to 'create history' at Anfield

Liverpool's new record signing Alexander Isak has vowed to "create history" after joining the English Premiership champions on the last day of the transfer window.

Isak was signed from Newcastle United for a British record transfer fee of £125m.

The Swedish international penned a six-year deal pushing Liverpool's spending spree during the transfer window to close to £416.2m, without add-on fees.

"It's a mixture of what the club is building, but what they're building on top of what the club already is. The history of the club," Isak told Liverpoolfc.com.

"Me getting the chance to be a part of this, I want to create history. I want to win trophies.

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(Supersport)

Donald vows Europe will be ready for Ryder Cup bear pit

EUROPE Ryder Cup captain Luke Donald vowed his squad would be ready to handle the pressure and intensity of the golf showdown against the United States later this month.

Donald, who guided Europe to victory two years ago in Rome, made his six captain's picks Monday to complete his line-up for the biennial matches on September 26-28 at Bethpage Black in suburban New York, where fans are expected to be loud USA supporters.

"If you're prepared and you're ready, we understand what's going to happen to us," Donald said.

"It's our reaction to that that's really important. We all have fears. We all have anxieties and we all find Ryder Cups pressurised, but these are top athletes that understand how to walk towards that fear.

"You want to embrace what a Ryder Cup represents and part of that is embracing the crowd and embracing that atmosphere and certainly these guys will be ready for that."

The Englishman will guide a veteran-filled squad, with his picks including Spain's Jon Rahm, Ireland's Shane Lowry, Sweden's Ludvig Åberg, Austrian Sepp Straka, Norway's Viktor Hovland and England's Matt Fitzpatrick.

Those qualifying automatically on points previously included Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, England's Justin Rose, Tyrrell Hatton and Tommy Fleetwood, Scotsman Robert MacIntyre and the only Cup rookie on the roster, Denmark's Rasmus Hojgaard.

"We can only be authentic to our-



▲ Europe Ryder Cup captain Luke Donald.

selves. I think if you look at New Yorkers, they appreciate that," Donald said. "They appreciate you going out there, fighting hard for your team.

"They will be very passionate and supportive of the US. We're quite aware of that and we'll be ready for the noise.

"Different challenges require different strategies and certainly this has been in the back of my mind for the whole captaincy."

Donald is also as prepared as possible for the expected day-one appearance of US President Donald Trump.

"For him to be there, it just shows how big the Ryder Cup is," Donald said.

"We're all expecting the crowds and the energy and the environment

to be very loud, be very spirited. I think he'll add to that.

"But again, there's something that we've been expecting. We know he was going to come for a few weeks, we heard, and we'll be ready for it."

Lowry is ready for whatever New York fans might bring.

"When you're prepared for something, it's much easier to handle it," he said.

Rahm, a Masters and US Open winner, expects New York fans to be impressive.

"It's going to be special," he said. "New Yorkers are going to be incredible fans. It's going to be difficult for us."

Rahm has learned from past taunts.

(Supersport)

Kaizer Chiefs star Mduduzi Shabalala eyes opportunity amid Bafana injuries

KAIZER Chiefs attacking midfielder Mduduzi Shabalala is determined to make the most of his opportunity after earning a call-up to the Bafana Bafana squad for this month's 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Lesotho and Nigeria. Bafana face Lesotho on Friday at the Dr Petrus Molemela Stadium, before taking on Nigeria on Tuesday, likely at the Free State Stadium.

Coach Hugo Broos' side is looking to extend their five-point lead at the top of Group C.

Shabalala is one of several new faces in the squad. Injuries and dips in form have forced Broos to make numerous changes compared to the team that overcame Lesotho and Benin in the March qualifiers.

The 21-year-old has been rewarded for a strong start to the season with Chiefs, who have collected 13 points from a possible 15 in their opening five Premiership games.

"The next step is to work hard and maintain my position in the team," Shabalala said this week.

"It is not easy, there are players with more experience than us, who are better than us. We need to play our part ... and be here in the next camps (too)."

The 21-year-old has emerged as one of Chiefs coach Nasreddine Nabi's trusted attackers over the last 15 months.

Although he is yet to record a goal or assist this season, Shabalala has been key in Amakhosi's fine start to the 2025/2026 season.

Shabalala's inclusion is also

influenced by his recent performances at the Cosafa Cup, where Bafana reached the final in June.

He believes the tournament helped showcase his abilities and catch Broos' attention.

"It was a good platform for us to showcase our game, and to prove to the coach that we want to be in the 'first' squad," he added.

Broos, meanwhile, has insisted he has full confidence in the squad despite the absences.

Regular Bafana players Khuliso Mudau, Grant Kekana, Nkosinathi Sibisi, Siphesihle Sithole, Thapelo Morena, Themba Zwane, Elias Mokwana and Patrick Maswanganyi will all miss the two matches.

Bafana will train in Johannesburg until Thursday, before heading to Bloemfontein.

The Lesotho game was moved from their home country due to FIFA concerns over pitch conditions, and the Dr Petrus Molemela Stadium will host the qualifier instead.

For Shabalala, the coming games represent a chance to cement his place in the squad.

Strong performances against Lesotho and Nigeria could see him feature regularly in Broos' plans as South Africa continue their quest for World Cup qualification.

(Supersport)



▲ Kaizer Chiefs attacking midfielder Mduduzi Shabalala

By Chris Dlamini

8BET TRADE FAIR CUP PREVIEW

Who's next to crash?

... As Moneni Pirates, Sea Birds, Leopard, G. Mamba face off

THE bigger they come, the harder they fall. That has been the case in the second edition of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025 at the hub of Eswatini, inside Mavuso Sports Centre since August 30.

It's the second phase of the quarterfinals getting underway on Wednesday. Interestingly, there is no Mbabane Highlanders, Manzini Wanderers and Mbabane Swallows, add last year's champions Young Buffaloes on the list, after they all lost in the last 16. Instead, last year's runners-up Moneni Pirates and Manzini Sea Birds are left to eliminate each other and advance to the semi-finals. The same goes for security forces rivals Royal Leopard and Green Mamba. The first quarter-finals double-header fixture was due later Tuesday between Nsingizini Hotspurs and Malanti Chiefs while Ezulwini United go head-on with Ubombo Sugar FC.

Malanti saw off Buffaloes, while Ezulwini edged Highlanders. Wanderers lost to Green Mamba. Let us get in the odds of the Derby fixtures.

PIRATES IN SEA BIRDS CLASH

Moneni Pirates vs. Manzini Sea Birds
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025
Kick-off: 7.30pm

The Sea Robbers of Moneni, as Moneni Pirates also fondly goes, surely need to be better than their last 16 match against a resilient Rangers. They won in a penalty shootout. This time, they face hub rivals Manzini Sea Birds, call them Izinyoni Zolwandle if you like. The latter also edged Swallows 2-1 on sudden death penalties after 1-all in regulation time of the final last 16 fixture on Monday. Both sides will look to win by hook or crook to get to the semi-finals. However, as noted by Sea Birds coach Friday Mncina that he would be up against a team that played on Saturday. This means Moneni has had more time to recondition and prepare than Sea Birds. However, the coach said he had confidence in his team was better than their hub rivals amid missing about four players due to senior national team Sihlangu Semnikati duty. Moneni, under the guidance of Malawi decorated head coach Meck Mwase, must be looking beyond Sea Birds after reaching the final last year. It will be a game to watch with flawless football expected.

HEAD-TO-HEAD (2024+25):

16-04-25 - League

M. Pirates 2-1 M. Sea Birds

Ingwenyama Cup:

15-02-2025

M. Sea Birds 1-1 M. Pirates

(M. Pirates won 2-1 on penalties)

30-11-2024 - League

M. Sea Birds 1-3 M Pirates

Players To Watch:

Qiniso Nyawo - M. Pirates goalkeeper)

Muzi Tsabedze (M. Sea Birds Captain, winger)

GREEN MAMBA OUT FOR WEAKENED LEOPARD

Royal Leopard vs. Green Mamba

Date: Wednesday, September 4, 2025

Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini

Kick-off: 5pm

It's a security forces derby. Bragging rights, pride and bringing the title home is everything for these two rivals. Police outfit Royal Leopard got into it without six regular starters who travelled with the senior national team Sihlangu Semnikati



▲ Senanelo Nkambule.

on Monday. This sees a weakened Leopard having to face off a Green Mamba with all its stars available for selection. That said, Leopard still has enough quality at their disposal to challenge for honours. They can match their Correctional Services rivals who had their last 16 fixture on Sunday. Leopard played on Monday with forward Thokozani 'Thikithi' Dlamini grabbing a brace in a 3-1 win over elite debutants Amawele. The police outfit gave new forward Mike Mohammed game time in the second half alongside Felix Badenhorst. They will compete with Green Mamba feared striker Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa, new arrival in midfielder Lindani 'Rio' Matsenjwa among others. It sure looks set to be a thriller.

HEAD-TO-HEAD (2024+25):

25 -05 -/25 - League

R. Leopard 3-0 G. Mamba

11 -01 -25 - League

G. Mamba 0-0 R. Leopard

Players To Watch:

Thokozani 'Thikithi' Dlamini (R. Leopard forward)

Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa (G. Mamba forward)



▲ Ezulwini United players celebrating.



▲ Samkelo Ginindza of Ubombo Sugar.



▲ Royal Leopard players.



▲ Moneni Pirates celebration. (Right) Green Mamba players celebrating their 2-0 win over Young Buffaloes.

All is set for the Africa Aquatics Zone IV championships

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE wait is over. The 2025 Africa Aquatics Zone IV championships will finally kick off on Wednesday (September 3, 2025).

The ten nations will be diving into the Enjabulweni Independent School and Luphohlo dam in search of glory.

The participating countries include Eswatini, Seychelles, South Africa, Lesotho, Mozambique, Angola, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Eswatini Swimming Association Secretary Nozipho Mahlalela said preparations for the event are proceeding smoothly.

“We look forward to the competition and are confident that our national team will perform well during the assignment,” she said.

She further thanked the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council and other companies for supporting the competition.

“We are grateful for the support from local companies towards hosting of the games and this will play a major role in the development of the sport,” she said.

The swimming mother body recently received E10 million insurance sponsorship from Eswatini Royal Insurance Corporation (ESRIC).

The cover will cover Swimmers during the international assignment.

The package includes accident and life cover worth E250 000.

Other sponsors include MTN Eswatini, Jenny Internet, Extreme Trade, Eswatini Air, and Coca-Cola, among others.

Team Eswatini includes four internationalists such as Siwakhile Dlamini, Chadd Ning, Hayley Hoy, and Luca Fraser.

The team is under the guidance of seasoned local coach Welcome Nhlabatsi.

The full squad

Head Coach: Welcome Nhlabatsi
Assistant Coach: Baphelele Masilela
Team Manager: Illana George

Team A

Kai Du Pont
Ivile Myeni
Joao Nunes
Harper Payne
Tsailin Barbosa
Portia Mabila
Sivikelwe Shongwe

Leah Dlamini
Sekukahle Mtsetfwa
Rachel Dlamini
Josea Potgieter
Kendra Mo Namara
Gabriel Paiva-Jarvis
Danika Wilsch



▲ Swimmers with national team coach Welcome Nhlabatsi during training at Mavuso Sports Centre.

Sinovuyo Dlamini
Daniella Nunes
Milani Ndzinisa
Sihlelelwe Shongwe
Emmanuel Dlamini
Bahle Simelane
Luca Fraser
Hayley Hoy
Tristan Way
Siwakhile Dlamini

Jordan Ryan
Tiano Fraser
Damien De Sousa
Chadd Ning
Simphiwe Dlamini
Simanga Dlamini
Team B
Bayanda Dlamini
Mukelwe Zwane
Fezibunye Mayabane

Esther Mlambo
Tumelo
Sihlongonyane
Joy Maphalala
Vuyo Kunene
Hlelolwenkhosi
Dlamini
Mukelwe Maziya
Wakhile Maseko
Wakhile Sambo

By Sibusiso Masilela
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ESWATINI Cycling Association Secretary Mxolisi Shongwe has stepped down from his position.

This follows the association’s Elective Annual General Meeting held at Manzini club where most of the executive retained their position, including President William Kelly.

A source close to the matter revealed that the association is already looking for Shongwe’s replacement.

“The association is in a process of hiring a new Secretary following the resignation of Shongwe. The candidates will be hired

on a full-time basis, and the candidate will be announced once everything has been finalised,” the source said.

ECA President William Kelly confirmed the latest news when reached for comment.

“Mr. Shongwe didn’t stand for the elections and felt he had done his part in the sport. We will forever be grateful for the service he has offered to the association,” he said.

The current cycling Association Executive Committee include Kelly, Treasurer, Mduduzi Mkhabela, and four board members.

The association is also expected to fill the

vacant vice president position.

Current board members include Gideon Mthembu, Gcinaphi Ndlovu, Sandile Maziya, and Sharon de Souza.

The current Cycling Executive

William Tiger Kelly - President
None - Vice President
Mduduzi Mkhabela - Treasurer
None - Secretary General
Members
Goinaphi Ndlovu
Sharon Desouza
Gideon Mthembu
Sandile Maziya



▲ Former Eswatini Cycling Association Secretary Mxolisi Shongwe.

Cycling secretary steps down



▲ The Athletes Commission with EOCGA CEO Maxwell Jele.

SA workshop for Athletes Commission

By Sibusiso Masilela
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STRENGTHENING ties for the betterment of athletes in the country.

The Eswatini Athletes Commission will be attending an international workshop in Tshwane between September 20-24, 2025.

The workshop will be facilitated by the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee.

The local body Chairman Sibusiso ‘Swazi Bolt’ Matsenjwa confirmed the latest developments.

“We will be attending a four-day workshop in South Africa where we will be capacitated on several components of the sports. This

includes the leadership and administration program, which will empower our members,” he said.

The retired national sprinter further thanked the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association for continued support.

“We are grateful for the support of EOCGA, which contributes to the development of sports in the country,” he said.

Members of the local athlete’s commission include Phumlile Ndzinisa, Saneliso Masuku, Robyn Young, Thabiso Dlamini and Muzi Shabangu. Matsenjwa was recently elected as the Chairman of the body during a meeting held at EOCGA offices in Lobamba.

He is also an EOCGA board member by virtue of being the Athletes Commission Chairman.



▲Nsingizini Hotspurs’ cup pedigree helped them to send a stubborn Malanti Chiefs packing in the 2025 8Bet Trade Fair Cup.

Nsingizini through to 8Bet Cup last four

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

Malanti Chiefs..... (o) o,
Nsingizini Hotspurs..... (o) o,
(Nsingizini Hotspurs won 4-1 on penalties)

FORM is temporary, but class is permanent.
Nsingizini Hotspurs’ cup pedigree helped them to send a stubborn Malanti Chiefs packing in the 2025 8Bet Trade Fair Cup.
The Shiselweni-based side had to wait until a lottery shootout to book their second consecutive semifinal appearance in the annual knockout tournament on Tuesday at

...Reigning league champions Nsingizini Hotspurs hold their nerves in penalty shootout to win 4-1 after a goalless draw in regulation time to advance to the semi-finals.

Mavuso Sports Centre.
The CAF champions League-bound side showed maturity during the penalty shootouts by converting their fourth spot kicks, ending the rookie’s dream of slaying another giant after booting out defending champions Young Buffaloes in the opening round.
The green and white ensemble is waiting for the winner between Moneni Pirates and Manzini Sea Birds for a semifinal battle scheduled for Friday.
Malanti Chiefs’ hearts are still aching after frustrating the fancied for the entire 90 minutes before losing the contest in the

lottery shootouts, characterised by three misses. The first half saw the two teams resorting to a cagey approach without creating chances in front of goals, with Thlogi handing a debut to former Mbabane Highlanders captain Thabo Langa , who was paired with Ghanaian defender Kingsley Kwakyi.
Malanti Chiefs had the first real half chance six minutes before the break when a Sifiso Makhubu’s shot was parried off the bar by Nsingizini Hotspurs goalkeeper Felizwe Vilakati.
The match opened during the second stanza with both sides coming hard at each

other. Malanti Chiefs South African winger Sandile Mazibuko was unlucky to score in the 71st minute when his dipping shot was parried off the bar by Felizwe Vilakati.
Nsingizini Marauding Winger Sambulo ‘Masoso’ Simelane forced a desperate save from the opposition goalkeeper, Bongiswa Dlamini, following a swift attacking move from the reigning MTN Premier League.
The Mandla Thlogi-led side thought they had broken the deadlock eight minutes before full-time when Mozambican striker Nonado Dorfiah’s close-range effort from a corner was ruled offside by the FIFA-accredited whistle man Sibandze

EFA, MRFA mourns Sibozza

THE Eswatini Football Association (EFA) has mourned the passing of football administrator Johannes ‘Ace’ Sibozza.
This follows the demise of Sibozza on Monday after a battle with an undisclosed illness.
The former Mbabane Highlanders player also chaired the Manzini Regional Football Association between 2018-2022.
He also served as Eswatini Football Association (EFA) Executive Committee during the era of the longest serving President Adam ‘Bomber’ Mthethwa.
“The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) and the entire football community in Eswatini are deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Mr. Johannes ‘Ace’ Sibozza. A dedicated football administrator and player, Mr. Sibozza made significant contributions to the sport throughout his career,” EFA said in a statement.
The organisation further revealed that the late Sibozza played a huge role in developing football locally and regionally.
He served as a member of the EFA Executive Committee, Chairperson



of the Manzini Regional Football Association (MRFA), Secretary of the MRFA, and was involved in various committees within the EFA. Additionally, he served on the Competitions Committee of the Council of Southern African Football Associations (COSAFA). As a player, he represented the Senior Men’s National Team (Sihlangu SeMnikati) and played for several clubs, including Mbabane Highlanders F.C. and Mbabane Dribbling Wizards F.C. The loss of Mr. Johannes ‘Ace’ Sibozza is profoundly felt within the football federation. His passion

or the game, both as an administrator and a player, was unmatched, demonstrating his commitment to the beautiful game. His extensive experience and knowledge in football administration and development will be sorely missed,” the mother body said.
MRFA mourned the passing of their Former Chairman.
“The MRFA Executive Committee, profoundly saddened by the passing of Johannes ‘Ace’ Sibozza, the esteemed former Chairman of the MRFA, whose tireless dedication to football has left a lasting legacy. His selfless service and unwavering passion for the sport have inspired countless individuals and shaped the very fabric of our community,” MRFA said through a statement.
He also served in various Football portfolios including working as Ingwenyama Cup Management Committee Chairman, among others.
He is third member of the local football fraternity to pass on in the last month after two Manzini Wanderers legends Adam ‘Ankel’ Dlamini and David ‘Botsotso’ Manyatsi.

Hall leads Sihlangu in Continental assignments

MANZINI Regional Football Association (MRFA) Chairman Vusi Hall has been appointed as the Sihlangu leader of the delegation in the next two 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.
Hall will lead the nations pride during the two assignments against Cameroon and Libya between September 4 and 8, 2025. The Zdravko Logarusic left the country by road on Monday to Johannesburg, where they connected a flight to Cameroon at the OR Tambo International Airport.
Eswatini Football Association Marketing and Communications Officer Muzi Radebe confirmed the latest news.
“It’s true that Mr. Hall will be with the national team in the two back-to-back matches,” 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 matches.
Chippa United striker Justice

Figureido joined the team in Johannesburg, while the duo of Alakhe Mdluli and Mthobisi Zwane were dropped from the squad.
Sihlangu squad
Simanga Masangane
Mzwandile Mabelesa
Mlamuli Makhanya
Gift Gamedze
Junior Magagula
Ayanda Kunene (All Royal Leopard)
Bongwa ‘Owa’ Matsebula
Innocent ‘Makhehleri’ 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 Figureido (Chippa United, SA)



Isak wants to create history at Liverpool

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EFA, MRFA mourn 'Ace' Sibozwa

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Sport



SHOCKS, THRILLS IN 8BET TRADE FAIR CUP AND

Nsingizini through to 8Bet Cup last four

● **Reigning league champions Nsingizini Hotspurs hold their nerves in penalty shootout to win 4-1 after a goalless draw in regulation time to advance to the semi-finals. Page 23**