



Eswatini Daily News

Thursday 4
September, 2025

▼ His Majesty King Mswati III issuing instructions to Princess Sakhizwe after commission the imbali to cut the reed.

- Charged Libutfo enters Engabezweni with cultural pride from Butimba
- Imbali make a bold statement calling for an end to GBV

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Respect will lead us forward — New Imbali Indvuna

By Kwanele Dhladhla and
Sebenele Ndlovu

A NIGHT of tradition, song, and splendour unfolded under the bright floodlights of Engabezweni Royal Residence as His Majesty King Mswati III commissioned the Imbali regiment to cut reed at Bhamsakhe and Mpisi Farm on Wednesday. The atmosphere was already charged with cultural pride as libutfo returned from Butimba at Hlane.

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PM highlights exporters' role in driving inclusive growth agenda

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▲ Imbali in high spirits after being commissioned by His Majesty King Mswati III to cut the reed.

Respect will lead us forward

— New Imbali Indvuna

By Kwanele Dhladhla and Sebenele Ndlovu

A NIGHT of tradition, song, and splendour unfolded under the bright floodlights of Engabezweni Royal Residence as His Majesty King Mswati III commissioned the Imbali regiment to cut reed at Bhamsakhe and Mpisi Farm on Wednesday.

The atmosphere was already charged with cultural pride as libutfo returned from Butimba at Hlane. They marched with discipline and energy. Thousands of maidens greeted them in style, draped in colourful regalia, singing, dancing, and ululating. The scene set the stage for one of the most memorable evenings of this year's Umhlanga Reed Dance.

► New Imbali Indvuna Mbali Hlatjwako.



▲ Libutfo returned with pride carrying their hunt from Butimba.

His Majesty presided over a historic moment, in front of Prime Minister Russell Dlamini, Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Thuli Dladla, Cabinet Ministers Pholile Shakantu and Jane Mkhonta-Simelane, Senate President Lindiwe, Members of Parliament, and other distinguished guests. The long-awaited appointment of a new Indvuna YeMbali took place.

Bongiwe Hlatjwako, a vibrant young woman from Nkamanzi under Chief Gija in the Hhohho Region, was named the new leader of the maidens. The position had remained vacant since August 2023, when the former Indvuna, Nonduduzo Zubuko, stepped down following her marriage.

Delivering the announcement on behalf of the King, Princess Sakhizwe underscored the importance of restoring

leadership to the regiment.

"His Majesty the King is proud to bless Bongiwe Hlatjwako as the new Indvuna YeMbali after Imbali had gone for a long time without one," she declared, her words sparking jubilation among the maidens.

Hlatjwako, who completed her Associate Degree in Public Relations at Limkokwing University in 2024 and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Communications, accepted the appointment with humility and determination.

"I will lead with respect, and I believe we will work together with Imbali to fulfil the desires of Their Majesties. I am deeply honored and humbled. Thank you for believing in me and for seeing me as the rightful person for this role. Bayethe Wena Waphakathi!" she said, her voice brimming with emotion.

She stressed that respect would form the backbone of her leadership.

"I will always make sure that the work of the King is done perfectly as ordered, and I believe Imbali will also do their best to carry out the desires of Their Majesties. Respect is the key to a brighter future," she added.

Former Indvuna YeMbali, Nothando

Nhlengethwa, congratulated Hlatjwako while urging her to lead with dignity.

"It's not just about you but about Imbali. You need to be representative and teach the youth about culture and, most importantly, respect," she said.

The announcement was met with thunderous ululation, dancing, and celebratory chants from the maidens, who expressed their joy once again having a leader among their ranks.

Hlatjwako now joins a distinguished lineage of women who have served as Indvuna YeMbali, including Ntfombikayise Shabangu, Dumsile Gule, Lungile Ndlovu, Sindi Thwala, and others entrusted by Their Majesties to safeguard the dignity and purpose of the maidens.

As the floodlights illuminated Engabezweni, the cultural heartbeat of the nation was on full display, discipline, unity, and pride. The appointment of Hlatjwako is seen as a continuation of the sacred values that the Umhlanga Reed Dance represents, ensuring that respect, tradition, and identity remain the guiding light for future generations of maidens.



King showers Imbali with gifts

By Bongekile Ngoamphalala
(Intern)

HIS Majesty King Mswati III on Wednesday showered the Imbali with thoughtful gifts during the second day of the annual Umhlanga Reed Dance, where they were commissioned to cut reed at Engabezweni Royal Residence. The gifts, which included a backpack, an Imbali Foundation-branded T-shirt, half a loaf of bread, and a 500ml Kingsley flavoured drink, were warmly received by the maidens after they had completed their march from the Ludzidzini Royal Residence to Engabezweni.

The Imbali expressed heartfelt gratitude to Their Majesties for the generous gesture, emphasising that the tokens of love strengthened their resolve to continue participating in the upcoming events of the ceremony.

One of the maidens, visibly moved, shared

how the gift would directly impact her schooling. “I will use my backpack at school since the one I was using is torn. I could not afford a new bag, so this means so much to me,” she said.

Another maiden from the Fire and Emergency Services highlighted the spirit of sharing inspired by the gifts.

“I will give the bag to my younger sister and the T-shirt to my disabled sister who could not make it to Umhlanga,” she explained.

In addition to the King’s gifts, the Deputy Prime Minister, Thulisile Dladla, also presented the maidens with essential toiletries. These included sanitary pads, body lotion, roll-on deodorant, and body spray.

Addressing the Imbali, Dladla took the opportunity to educate the young girls on the importance of personal care and maintaining good hygiene.

“It would be so sad to see young girls at your age getting sick because of poor hygiene and laziness to take care of yourselves,” she



▲ The ceremony continues to draw thousands of maidens from across Eswatini and beyond, underscoring the enduring cultural pride and unity embodied in Umhlanga.

stressed. Her words echoed a broader message of empowerment and responsibility, reinforcing the cultural celebration’s significance not only as a showcase of purity and tradition but also as a platform for nurturing the maidens’ well-being.

The ceremony continues to draw thou-

sands of maidens from across Eswatini and beyond, underscoring the enduring cultural pride and unity embodied in Umhlanga. As the week unfolds, the Imbali look forward with excitement to further blessings and moments of cultural celebration under the guidance of Their Majesties.

Customised vehicles for Imbali living with disability in push for Umhlanga inclusion

By Sebutlelo Magagula
(Intern)

IN a landmark step toward promoting inclusivity at one of Eswatini’s most celebrated cultural events, the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office provided specially designed vehicle to 30 disabled Imbali (maidens) ahead of this year’s Umhlanga Reed Dance.

The brand-new custom van accommodates up to 10 maidens and five wheelchairs, featuring safety belts and transfer-friendly seating to ensure easier and more dignified travel for participants.

Officials said the donation would ease transportation challenges and allow the maidens to take part fully in future national gatherings.

The initiative was further strengthened by the Royal Family’s pledge to provide two additional wheelchairs.

This comes after His Majesty King Mswati III recently presented the maidens with branded bags



▲ The Deputy Prime Minister Thuli Dladla, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Pholile Shakantu, Senate President Lindiwe Dlamini, and minister of Tourism Jane Mkhonta - Simelane in song and dance at Engabezweni Royal Residence as Umhlanga Ceremony entered Day 2.

like I truly belong. It’s not just a vehicle; it’s a symbol of how much our country values us,” said one maiden with albinism.

Another maiden who uses a wheelchair described the development as life-changing: “This is a dream come true for us. The new car and the support we’re receiving make it possible for all of us to attend and serve the King. We are a family, and now we can travel as one.”

Preparations are underway at kaBhamusakhe, where the maidens are cutting reed under the guidance of Make Ndwandwe and Skhulile, sent by Inkhosikati laNgangaza. An interpreter, Bathabile, provides sign language support for those who cannot speak.

The maidens, who also host a program on local radio and television, proudly wear their traditional attire branded with the slogan “Asibambaneni sibe nguMndeni”—meaning “Let’s hold hands and be a family”—a testament to their unity and resilience.



▲ The DPM Thuli Dladla with Imbali Evon Jones.

PM highlights exporters' role in driving inclusive growth agenda

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
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PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini delivered a powerful message at the Eswatini National Export Excellence Awards (ENEXA), highlighting the critical role of exporters in driving the nation's economic growth and transformation.

His remarks underscored the government's commitment to recognising and supporting businesses that push boundaries and contribute significantly to Eswatini's GDP. At the heart of his address, the Prime Minister expressed deep honour in celebrating exporters, whom he described as "not just entrepreneurs; they are the country's GDP envoys, the major contributors to the country's economic performance." This powerful characterisation elevates exporters from mere business operators to key architects of Eswatini's economic future, emphasising their vital role in the nation's prosperity.

The event, organised by the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) and its partners, took place amid the 57th Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF), a major platform fostering business opportunities. Prime Minister Dlamini acknowledged



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini toured Eswatini International Trade Fair stalls.

the importance of this timing, noting that the Trade Fair has "already created exciting opportunities for our business community." The upcoming celebration of 57 years of the Trade Fair, to be attended by His Majesty King Mswati III, serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of exports in Eswatini's economic landscape. Looking beyond the immediate celebrations, the Prime Minister linked the significance of exports to the broader vision of national transformation. He referenced the government's strategic framework, including the "Grand Plan for National Transformation, which is in its final stakeholder engagement stage," as well as medium-term initiatives

like the Nkwe Programme of Action and the National Development Plan. These plans collectively place exports "at the centre of the country's inclusive exponential growth agenda," signalling a clear governmental focus on leveraging export-led growth to achieve development goals. Dlamini articulated a bold vision for Eswatini's future, aiming to transform the country into a developed nation and elevate it to the status of an upper-middle-income country by 2028. This vision aligns with the country's long-term economic ambitions and highlights the strategic importance of export activities as a driver of sustainable development and economic diversification.

PM tours Trade Fair stalls

PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini conducted an extensive tour of various exhibition stalls at the ongoing Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF), held at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre in Manzini. This high-profile visit underscored the government's commitment to promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and national development through platforms that showcase the country's diverse economic potential. During his tour, Prime Minister Dlamini engaged directly with numerous exhibitors representing key institutions across multiple sectors.

The displays ranged from cutting-edge technological innovations to essential services and business opportunities aimed at driving Eswatini's socio-economic growth. The Prime Minister's interactions were marked by a keen interest in understanding the exhibitors' products and services, as well as their challenges and plans.

In his discussions, the

Prime Minister offered thoughtful suggestions to exhibitors on how they could enhance and better position their products in both local and international markets. His advice emphasised the importance of quality improvement, innovation, and alignment with global standards to increase competitiveness. By encouraging exhibitors to continuously refine their offerings, the Prime Minister aimed to foster a culture of excellence and resilience among Eswatini's business community.

Accompanying Prime Minister Dlamini on this tour were several key government officials, including Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Pholile Shakantu, Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo, and Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima. Their presence highlighted the multi-sectoral approach the government is taking to support the trade fair and the broader economic agenda.

Rhodes Food Group Eswatini crowned Exporter of the Year at ENEXA 2025

THE Eswatini National Export Excellence Awards (ENEXA) 2025 culminated in a grand celebration of the country's most outstanding exporters, recognising their pivotal role in driving economic growth and enhancing Eswatini's presence in global markets. The awards ceremony, held at the FNB Business Chamber during the Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF), was a testament to the resilience, innovation, and strategic acumen of Eswatini's export sector.

Organised by the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) in partnership with Business Eswatini, the Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS), the Youth Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship, and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, ENEXA 2025 highlighted the diverse achievements of exporters across multiple categories. This collaborative effort underscores the nation's commitment to stimulating export trade and fostering a vibrant local trade environment.

Thandeka Dlamini, Manager of External Trade Promotion at EIPA, emphasised the critical role exporters play in the country's economic landscape. "Our exporters are the backbone of Eswatini's participation in the global economy. Today's winners are proof of what resilience, innovation, and strategic use of trade agreements can achieve. They are not only creating jobs locally but also ensuring Eswatini products remain competitive and visible in global markets," she said. Dlamini extended congratulations to Rhodes Food Group Eswatini for securing the prestigious Exporter of the Year Award, as well as to all category winners and runners-up. She also acknowledged the invaluable support of partner organisations that made the awards



▲ Rhodes Food Group Eswatini were crowned Exporter of the Year at ENEXA 2025.

possible.

The standout achievement of Rhodes Food Group Eswatini, a prominent food processor based in Malkerns, was recognised not only with the Exporter of the Year Award but also with the Best Exporter for Market Diversification. Their success reflects a strategic approach to expanding into new markets and maintaining high standards of quality, which have propelled their products onto the international stage.

Another major highlight was the Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation, which earned two accolades: High Impact Exporter and Most Innovative and Versatile Exporter. Their ability to innovate within the sugar industry and adapt to changing market demands has solidified their position as a key player in Eswatini's export economy.

Lactalis Eswatini was honoured as the Best Exporter for Product Diversification, showcasing their broad range of dairy products that meet varied consumer needs across different markets. Meanwhile, Eswatini Coffee received the Best Emerging Exporter award, signalling the growing potential of the country's coffee sector.

The awards also celebrated exporters who have effectively leveraged trade agreements. Ngwenya Glass (Pty) Ltd was recognised for Best Trade Agreement Utilisation Exporter Beyond Africa, while Montigny Investments (Pty) Ltd took home the Best Exporter to Africa award, highlighting their success in regional markets.

Support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) was spotlighted with Ukwazi Makadamia (African Christian College)

The full list of ENEXA 2025 winners is as follows:

- Exporter of the Year** – Rhodes Food Group Eswatini
- High Impact Exporter** – Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation
- Best Exporter for Market Diversification** – Rhodes Food Group Eswatini
- Best Exporter for Product Diversification** – Lactalis Eswatini
- Most Innovative and Versatile Exporter** – Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation
- Best Emerging Exporter** – Eswatini Coffee
- Best Trade Agreement Utilisation Exporter Beyond Africa** – Ngwenya Glass (Pty) Ltd
- Best Exporter to Africa** – Montigny Investments (Pty) Ltd
- MSME Exporter of the Year** – Ukwazi Makadamia (African Christian College)
- Woman Exporter of the Year** – Eswatini Foods
- Youth Exporter of the Year** – Smiling Through Farming and Supplies
- Trade Finance Support of the Year** – First National Bank (FNB)
- Trade Support Initiative of the Year** – International Trade Centre & EU – Promoting Growth through Competitive Alliances

winning MSME Exporter of the Year. The Woman Exporter of the Year award went to Eswatini Foods, and Smiling Through Farming and Supplies was named Youth Exporter of the Year, reflecting the growing diversity and inclusion within the export sector.

Financial and trade support initiatives were also acknowledged. First National Bank (FNB) received the Trade Finance Support of the Year award for its role in facilitating export transactions, while the International Trade Centre & EU were honoured for the Trade Support Initiative of the Year, promoting growth through competitive alliances.

Gogo (85) arrested in connection with murder of 75-year-old man in Somntongo

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

A tragic incident has shocked the Somntongo community after a 75-year-old man lost his life following an assault allegedly carried out by an elderly woman.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Police Information and Communication Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the matter unfolded on Sunday night, 1 September 2025, at around 23:00 hours. The victim, a resident of Somntongo, succumbed to his injuries while receiving treatment at Matsanjeni Health Centre.

Police investigations revealed that the man sustained serious injuries after being struck with a stick on his right leg and left arm. Despite efforts by medical staff to save him, he died during treatment. The alleged assailant, an 85-year-old woman also from Somntongo, was immediately taken into custody by police officers. She has

since been charged with murder and is expected to appear before court on Thursday.

“This is a deeply concerning case, particularly because it involves members of the elderly community. The suspect has been charged and will face the full might of the law,” Senior Superintendent Vilakati confirmed.

The motive behind the assault remains unclear, and police have launched a full investigation to establish the circumstances that led to the fatal confrontation.

The Somntongo community has expressed shock and sadness at the incident, describing it as unusual and heartbreaking, especially given the advanced ages of both the victim and the suspect. Community leaders have appealed for calm and urged residents to allow the law to take its course.

The REPS have also taken the opportunity to remind the public that violence, regardless of age or circumstance, remains a crime and cannot be tolerated.

The suspect is due to make her first court appearance on Thursday, where she is expected to be formally charged.



▲ The 85-year-old woman has been charged with murder and is expected to appear before court on Thursday.

NatCom declares Butimba ceremony a security success

THE recently concluded 10-day-long Butimba Ceremony has been hailed as a resounding success in terms of security, with the National Commissioner of Police, Vusi Manoma Masango, confirming that the traditional event was incident-free.

Addressing the media after the conclusion of the ceremony, Masango commended the police and other security agencies deployed to safeguard the cultural festivities, noting that their professionalism and vigilance ensured the safety of all participants. “This year’s Butimba has shown that when our security forces work with resilience and passion, incidents can be prevented. We are proud to say the event was conducted without a single breach of peace or safety,” he said.

The National Commissioner, who was personally tasked by His Majesty King Mswati III to oversee the distribution of firearms to the emabutfo (regiments), further revealed that no illegal firearms were uncovered during the entire course of the hunting expedition.

Masango also took the opportunity to remind the nation that September has been declared Eswatini Firearm Amnesty Month. During this period, citizens in possession of illegal firearms are encouraged to surrender them at police

stations without fear of arrest or prosecution.

He cautioned, however, that this grace period would not last indefinitely. “Those who fail to take advantage of the amnesty will have no excuse once it ends. After September, the police will roll out intensive operations nationwide to recover illegal firearms. Offenders will face the full might of the law,” Masango warned sternly.

The Commissioner went on to express hope that the same dedication and commitment shown by security personnel during Butimba would extend to this year’s ongoing Umhlanga Reed Dance Ceremony, another of Eswatini’s highly revered cultural events.

The Butimba Ceremony reached its climax yesterday with a spectacular march led by His Majesty King Mswati III. The King and thousands of emabutfo embarked on a 13-kilometre journey from Hlane Royal Residence to Hlane National Park – Engweni. Upon arrival, His Majesty officially commissioned the regiments for their final hunting expedition, marking the grand conclusion of the cultural festival.

The Butimba, which combines tradition, unity, and the spirit of nationhood, continues to serve as a symbolic reminder of Eswatini’s rich cultural heritage, while also providing a platform for reinforcing discipline and social cohesion among regiments.



▲ National Commissioner of Police Vusi Manoma Masango.

Two men arrested for illegal possession of shotgun in Ekwakheni

POLICE have arrested two men in connection with the illegal possession of a firearm in the Ekwakheni area, raising further concerns about unlicensed weapons circulating within communities.

According to the Chief Police Information and Communication Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the arrests were made on the morning of 2 September 2025 at around 06:00 hours.

The suspects, aged 37 and 21, both from Gilinyatsi, were found in possession of a 12-bore shotgun. Investigations revealed that neither of the men had a valid permit or licence to possess the firearm.

“The suspects were immediately taken into police custody and have been charged accordingly. They will be expected to appear in court to face charges of unlawful possession of a firearm,” Vilakati confirmed in a statement.

The incident comes at a time when authorities are intensifying efforts to curb the proliferation of illegal firearms in Eswatini. Police have repeatedly warned that such weapons pose a serious threat to public safety, as they are often linked to violent crimes, including robberies, assaults, and murders.

The REPS have urged the public to cooperate with the ongoing campaign against illegal firearms by reporting individuals suspected of possessing weapons without licences. They reminded citizens that legal amnesty processes are available at times to allow people to surrender unlicensed firearms without facing prosecution.

The two suspects remain in custody pending their court appearance. Police investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the shotgun and whether it may have been used in any previous criminal activities.

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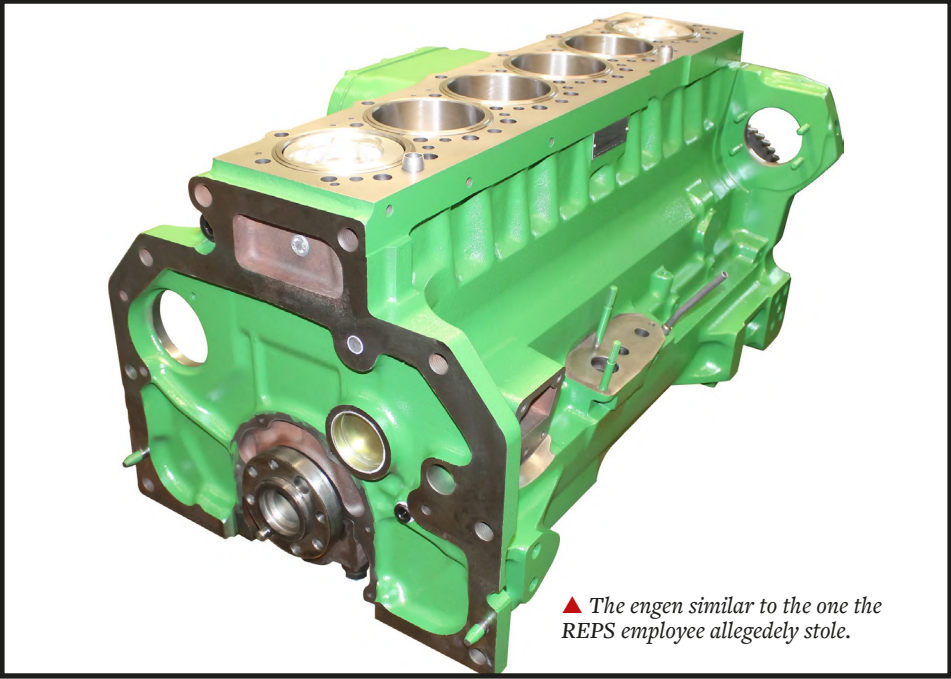
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You have read the rest, now read the best

Stories by Delisa Magagula

RES employee arrested over alleged theft of tractor



▲ The engin similar to the one the REPS employee allegedly stole.

AN employee of the Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation (RES) has been arrested in connection with the alleged theft of a tractor engine, following the recovery of a Bell tractor engine block at a homestead in Mpofu.

The arrest, confirmed by Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, occurred after investigators traced the stolen equipment to the rural homestead on Sunday at around 1 p.m.

The suspect, a 45-year-old man employed by RES, was subsequently taken into custody. Police said the engine was reported stolen last Wednesday night from the RES Corporation’s Mhlume workshop.

The tractor had been parked inside the premises after a routine shift and was found dismantled the following morning.

A source at Tshaneni Village told investigators that the Bell tractor engine, valued at approximately E75 000, was discovered missing when employees reported for duty at about 7:30 a.m. on Thursday.

Workers alerted the Tshaneni Police Station after realising that the heavy-duty engine had been removed from the vehicle overnight.

“Everything seemed normal when the tractor was parked the previous evening, but the following day we noticed that the engine block was gone,” the employee said.

The theft raised immediate suspicions due to the size and weight of the equipment, which would have required specialised tools and transport to remove.

Police officers launched an investigation, canvassing the area and questioning workers

and residents in nearby communities.

It was through intelligence gathered over several days that the lead pointing to Mpofu emerged. The breakthrough came on Sunday afternoon when police descended on the homestead and discovered the stripped en-

gine block concealed in a shed.

According to law enforcement officials, the recovery of the stolen part provided a direct link to the RES employee.

“We were able to establish the chain of movement of the engine from the workshop to the homestead,” an investigator close to the matter explained.

The suspect was immediately arrested and is expected to face theft charges in court.

The Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation, one of the country’s largest employers and exporters, expressed concern over the incident.

Company representatives said internal investigations were being conducted alongside the police inquiry to determine how the theft was carried out inside the workshop.

“We rely heavily on our fleet of tractors and related equipment for daily operations, and any interference with these assets affects production,” read their statement.

The incident has raised questions among residents of surrounding communities, particularly about the growing trend of industrial theft targeting large corporations in the Lowveld.

Community members near Mhlume said that, while petty theft is common, stealing and transporting something as heavy as a tractor engine suggested careful planning.

Marshall beaten up for fare

A LONG-SERVING rank marshal from Siteki was assaulted by a kombi driver and his conductor after failing to pay a E15 bus fare, an incident that has raised concern about violence linked to disputes over transport fees.

The victim, 56-year-old Bheki Masuku, had worked at Siteki Bus Rank for decades and was widely known among commuters and transport operators. He was allegedly beaten by driver Sakhile Hlatshwako (39) and conductor Nkosingiphile Dlamini (21), who accused him of refusing to pay his fare.

Court documents reveal that Masuku boarded the kombi at Matsetsa on his way to Siteki. Witnesses said he appeared intoxicated and was carrying a beer bottle.

According to the driver’s statement, Masuku assured him that another rank marshal would settle his fare once they arrived at the bus rank.

However, upon arrival at Siteki, no one came forward to pay the amount. The accused claimed that

Masuku became confrontational when pressed for payment.

They alleged that he refused to cooperate and even bit the driver on the cheek during the altercation, leaving a scar.

The driver and conductor then forced Masuku into the kombi and drove him to a secluded spot near the Siteki Galp Filling Station. There, they assaulted him with fists and open hands until he sustained visible injuries.

The matter was reported to the police, leading to the arrest of both men. They were charged with assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. The two appeared before Principal Magistrate Musa Nxumalo, where they pleaded guilty.

The Crown presented an agreed statement of facts that confirmed the sequence of events.

Both accused admitted to assaulting the marshal, saying their actions stemmed from frustration over unpaid bus fares and Masuku’s behaviour at the time.

During mitigation, the accused pleaded for leniency. They explained that they had already spent the

weekend in custody following their arrest and

argued that they did not know Masuku was a rank marshal, as he had been absent from the bus rank for about a year.

They also claimed they were provoked by his refusal to pay and his violent reaction.

The court, however, emphasised that the use of violence could not be justified under any circumstances.

Principal Magistrate Nxumalo said the case demonstrated how quickly disputes could escalate into criminal acts when individuals resorted to self-help instead of lawful processes.

Each of the accused was sentenced to six months in a correctional facility, with the option of paying a E500 fine.

Magistrate Nxumalo said the punishment served both as a deterrent and a reminder that the rule of law must be upheld.

“The accused should have reported the matter to the relevant authorities rather than taking the law into their own hands,” he ruled.

Soccer boss arrested for alleged rape

A 40-year-old man, believed to be the owner of a local soccer team, has been arrested and charged with the rape of a 23-year-old male player, in a case that has shocked the community of Tshaneni.

The incident occurred on Sunday at the Gomorra compound, where both the survivor and the suspect reside.

The survivor’s mother and the suspect are employed as labourers in nearby sugarcane fields, and the two men had known each other through the soccer club and community activities.

Sources said the survivor and the suspect had been drinking together on the day of the incident. While details remain unclear, it is alleged that the suspect lured the younger man to a secluded spot, where the assault occurred.

Residents of the compound expressed disbelief after learning of the crime, saying the accused had not previously shown signs of such behaviour.

Some noted that he lived without a spouse, but they had not considered it unusual until the incident.

“It was only after we heard about the incident that we started to see that as a red flag,” one resident said.

Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni confirmed the case, saying the matter had been reported and the suspect arrested.

She added that investigations were on-going and the accused was expected to appear in court soon.

The case has brought attention to the issue of sexual violence against men, which experts say is often under-reported. The Eswatini Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA) said while rape cases involving women and girls dominate statistics, men are also victims.

SWAGAA Executive Director Nonhlanhla Dlamini explained that most cases involving male survivors reported to the organisation relate to minors, though adult cases have also emerged.

“The psychological effects of rape against men and boys are the same as those experienced by women and girls,” she said.

The suspect has been charged and is awaiting trial. Police said further details would be released as the case progresses.

Authorities emphasised that Eswatini’s justice system treats all rape cases with seriousness, regardless of the survivor’s gender.



BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

FINCORP sustains 15 000 jobs

THE Eswatini Development Finance Corporation (FINCORP) has sustained more than 15 000 jobs in the past 15 years through its financing initiatives, Group Managing Director Dumisani Msibi has announced. Speaking during the launch of the third Junior Achievement (JA) Business Shower at the Mavuso Trade Centre in Manzini, Msibi said the corporation remained committed to empowering entrepreneurs and building communities through access to finance and training.

OPEC+ to consider further oil output hike on Sunday, sources say

LONDON/MOSCOW — Eight OPEC+ members will consider further raising oil production at a meeting on Sunday, two sources familiar with the discussions said, as the group seeks to regain market share. OPEC+ has reversed its strategy of output cuts from April and has already raised quotas by about 2.5 million barrels per day, about 2.4 per cent of world demand, to boost market share and under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to lower oil prices.

SA business confidence slips further in Q3

SOUTH African business confidence slipped a point further sequentially in the third quarter of 2025, weighed down by hefty U.S. tariffs on the country's exports, a survey showed on Wednesday. Business confidence fell to 39 points, three points below the long-term average level of 42, according to a survey by the Rand Merchant Bank and compiled by the Bureau of Economic Research.

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.3312	17.7938
G.B. Pound	23.2755	23.9425
EURO	20.1018	20.7098
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	

Eswatini targets sugar import substitution through AfCFTA

By Delisa Magagula

THE Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini has expressed its intention to leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the importation of sugar into the country.

Speaking during the Eswatini Standards Authority (ESWASA) standards seminar at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade Director of Trade, Lungile Dlamini, said AfCFTA presented Eswatini with an opportunity to drive self-sufficiency and enhance its competitiveness in the sugar industry.

The seminar was held on the sixth day of the Eswatini International Trade Fair under the theme 'Advancing Business Growth through Standardization and Certification'.

Dlamini told participants that AfCFTA was not only a trade agreement but also a framework through which the country could align its industries for greater production and market access.

"We must use AfCFTA as a strategic tool to stop importing sugar completely and to strengthen our domestic sector so that it is competitive across Africa," she said.

She explained that while Eswatini is one of Africa's notable exporters of sugar, the country still imports refined sugar to meet certain domestic needs.

"The paradox is that we are both exporters and importers. This is a gap that can be closed by aligning production processes, standards, and markets under AfCFTA," she said.

The seminar emphasised the role of standards and certification in positioning Eswatini's products to compete within regional and continental markets. Dlamini said standardization was central to trade facilitation and consumer confidence.

"A product that meets agreed standards can move across borders without difficulty. This is essential if Eswatini is to seize the full potential of AfCFTA," she stated.

The ESWASA Chief Executive Officer, Ncamiso Mhlanga, also addressed the seminar, underlining the importance of compliance.

He said the authority was committed to ensuring that businesses understood certification requirements.

"Our role is to make sure that when you produce in Eswatini, your product is recognized across Africa for quality and safety. This is what will give our industries a competitive advantage," Mhlanga explained.

Eswatini's sugar industry has long been a pillar of the economy, accounting for about 5 per cent of the country's GDP and supporting around 20,000 direct jobs.

However, official figures indicate that Eswatini continues to spend millions on sugar imports. According to FAOSTAT, the country imported 3.23 million kilograms of refined sugar in 2022, valued at US\$2.62 million.

Dlamini said reducing this dependence was not just about trade balances but also about industrial transformation.

"When we continue to import what we can produce, we lose opportunities for local val-



▲ ESWASA CEO Ncamiso Mhlanga making his key remarks during the seminar.

ue addition and job creation. Our goal is to strengthen domestic refining capacity and ensure that we no longer rely on imports," she stated.

Dlamini noted that AfCFTA, which connects 55 African countries into a single market of 1.3 billion people, offered Eswatini new avenues for expanding trade beyond its traditional partners.

"Eswatini's participation in AfCFTA is about more than exports. It is about positioning our economy to supply domestic and regional demand sustainably," she said.

She highlighted that sugar was only one example of products where import substitution could deliver growth.

"We have seen the potential in other sectors such as textiles, processed foods, and light manufacturing. But sugar is a strategic starting point because of its economic significance and the strength of our industry," she said.

Industry representatives who attended the seminar said the government's intention to phase out sugar imports aligned with their goals.

During a recent launch of Spotted Horse Rum Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation Director Nick Jackson said the industry was work-

ing closely with regulators and trade agencies to expand refining capacity and diversify sugar products.

"We are confident that with AfCFTA and the right policy support, Eswatini can fully meet its domestic sugar needs and continue to grow as an exporter," the Director.

Small and medium enterprise owners also expressed optimism. One entrepreneur producing sugar-based confectionery products said local sourcing would reduce input costs and improve reliability.

"If imports are reduced, it means we can depend more on domestic suppliers. This will strengthen small businesses," she said.

Dlamini said government policies, including the AfCFTA implementation strategy and industrial development frameworks, would support the transition.

"We will continue to work with producers, regulators, and development partners to ensure that Eswatini can achieve sugar self-sufficiency. Standards, certification, and competitiveness are at the core of this strategy," she concluded.

The seminar ended with calls for collaborative efforts among government agencies, private sector players, and consumers to promote the 'Made in Eswatini' label.

FINCORP sustains 15 000 jobs

By Delisa Magagula

... Injects E300k into JA business shower

THE Eswatini Development Finance Corporation (FINCORP) has sustained more than 15 000 jobs in the past 15 years through its financing initiatives, Group Managing Director Dumisani Msibi has announced.

Speaking during the launch of the third Junior Achievement (JA) Business Shower at the Mavuso Trade Centre in Manzini, Msibi said the corporation remained committed to empowering entrepreneurs and building communities through access to finance and training.

He revealed that FINCORP had injected E300 000 into this year's business shower, bringing the total investment into JA programmes to about E1 million.

Over the past two years alone, the company invested E600 000 into the same initiative.

"These resources are not just numbers. They are transforming lives, uplifting families, and empowering communities across the Kingdom," he said.

According to Msibi, the impact of FINCORP's work could be seen in the growth of enterprises and jobs created.

He disclosed that about E1.5 billion is currently circulating in the hands of Emaswati entrepreneurs supported by FINCORP's products and services.

"This is capital that is developing individuals economically and ensuring that their families and communities' benefit," he noted.

Msibi further highlighted the findings of the 2023 Blended FinScope MSME Survey, which showed that Eswatini is home to approximately 70 000 enterprises employing over 90 000 people and contributing nearly 50 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

He said the statistics demonstrated the central role played by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the national economy.

He pointed out that the MSME Policy 2024-2029 had acknowledged FINCORP's contribution in addressing financing barriers, especially for micro and rural enterprises.

"Young people are the heartbeat of our nation, yet too often, they face one of the greatest barriers to entrepreneurship and access to finance due to lack of collateral," he stated.

To address this challenge, Msibi explained that FINCORP had signed an agreement with the Centre for Financial Inclusion (CFI) to provide additional support for young entrepreneurs.

The agreement covers 20 per cent per borrower and supports loans of up to E250 000 for youth between the ages of 18 and 35. Beneficiaries include those already running, or willing to start, farm and non-farm enterprises in selected cluster locations.

"Finance alone is not enough, and we believe that this initiative is more than just a program, but a Launchpad for young entrepreneurs," he said.

In addition, he said, mentorship to take their first bold steps into business with confidence. E50 000 will go directly to support the top five winning businesses with E10 000 seed capital each to help them launch their new ventures."

Msibi also said the Citizen Economic Empowerment Act and the Business One Stop



▲ Ministry of Commerce and FINCORP Executives handing over the E300K cheque.



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo during the Business Shower.

Shop (BOSS) had set the stage for MSMEs, especially youth-led businesses, to enter the market with fewer barriers, greater support and more confidence.

"The future of Eswatini's economy cannot be reinvigorated by a few large companies here and there, but by thousands of existing and future entrepreneurs including those gathered here today," he added.

He reassured young entrepreneurs that FINCORP remained committed to expanding partnerships, innovating services and walking alongside them.

"When you succeed, communities prosper; when you thrive, the nation thrives," he said.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, described the JA Business Shower as instrumental in enhancing MSME growth and encouraging investment.

He commended Junior Achievement Eswatini for creating opportunities for young people to participate in meaningful econom-



▲ JA Eswatini Executive Director Phetsile Masilela.

ic activity during the Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF).

Khumalo said youth empowerment remained a government priority, stressing that platforms such as the trade fair offered traders the opportunity to promote themselves in the local market.

"The EITF serves as an excellent platform for traders to introduce or promote themselves, complemented by various value-adding activities such as business seminars that run throughout the duration of the show," he said.

The minister assured young entrepreneurs that government support would continue.

"Government shall continue to support JA Eswatini through an annual subvention of E500 000 for promoting youth MSMEs and cooperatives in schools and out of school," Khumalo said.

He explained that the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development had worked closely with his ministry to ensure financial support for programmes such as JA financial

literacy and entrepreneurship, as well as co-operatives development.

He further encouraged young people to make use of existing support mechanisms.

These include the Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund (YERF), Informal Traders Revolving Fund, Regional Development Fund (RDF), the E45 million MSME Revolving Fund, Women Micro Finance Revolving Fund, Eswatini Agricultural Development Fund (EADF), Small Scale Enterprise Loan Guarantee Scheme (SSELGS) and the Export Credit Guarantee Scheme (ECGS).

Meanwhile, JA Eswatini Executive Director Phetsile Masilela said the annual government subvention had enabled the organisation to implement financial literacy and entrepreneurship training for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

She noted that the support came at a time when JA Eswatini was affected by the termination of USAID grants to the country.

Looking ahead, Masilela said JA would host a Business Masterclass facilitated by different stakeholders.

She revealed that 35 applications had been received from young entrepreneurs seeking to pitch their businesses for seed capital support through the business shower.

Out of these, 10 business plans were short-listed, with five set to receive funding as determined by judges.

She emphasised that the business shower had grown into a platform where youth could not only access financial support but also gain mentorship and skills that would allow them to grow sustainable enterprises.

With 15 000 jobs sustained over the past decade and a half, and billions of Emalangen circulating among small businesses, FINCORP's role as a key driver of economic empowerment was underlined during the ceremony.

As the business shower progresses alongside the trade fair, organisers expressed hope that more young people would seize the opportunity to position themselves as the next generation of business leaders.

Central banks urged to pool dollar reserves as Fed help questioned

By Jaspreet Kalra

FRANKFURT — The European Central Bank and its peers around the world should pool their reserves for U.S. dollar liquidity as Federal Reserve help cannot be guaranteed given President Donald Trump's criticism, the head of an influential think tank said.

Adam Posen of the Peterson Institute for International Economics told an ECB conference on Wednesday it should not be taken for granted that a politicised Fed would lend dollars to foreign central banks in a crisis, as it did a few times since the 2007-2008 financial meltdown.

He recommended that the ECB and its peers outside the United States pool their reserves in dollars in order to provide emergency liquidity to domestic banks if needed. This option has been raised by European central bankers behind closed doors.

"Whether it's acknowledged publicly or not, there has to be thinking short term about alternative pooling of assets and swap lines and dollars among major central banks



▲ U.S. dollar banknotes are seen in this illustration.

and governments," Posen said.

"You will have to team with other central banks, and it's going to have to start being open... about having alternative swap lines," he told the conference hosted by ECB President Christine Lagarde.

The Fed earlier this year renewed liquidity lines with a number of major central banks and has never suggested it would end these facilities. Central bankers who privately discussed such a move in the past said the main issue was with its size.

The market for U.S. dollar bonds and loans issued outside the United States is worth around 25 trillion euros (\$29 trillion), according to BIS data. All foreign central banks put together have dollar-denominated reserves of just 7 trillion euros.

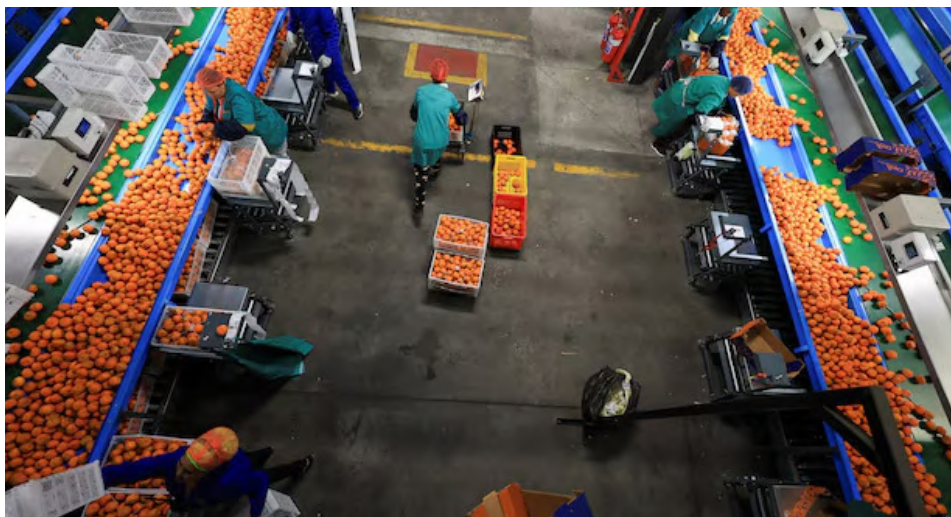
This meant that these alternative swap lines would only suffice to tackle a local, rather than global, crisis, Posen said in a conversation after the event.

He expected regional arrangements such as the Chiang Mai Initiative of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Arab Monetary Fund to play a greater role too. ECB supervisors have also told banks they watch their exposure to the dollar and other foreign currencies, fearing Fed swap lines might be withdrawn while surging economic conflicts may make markets more volatile.

Posen said the ECB should be "thinking about getting certain systemic institutions out of dollar liquidity needs over the medium to long term".

European University Institute professor Thorsten Beck told the conference that the ECB should also tackle the risk of euro zone payments relying on U.S. credit card providers Visa and Mastercard.

The ECB is developing a digital euro to provide an alternative to those cards and to dollar-denominated stablecoins. (Reuters)



▲ Distribution workers work with tangerines at Goede Hoop Citrus in Citrusdal, Western Cape province, South Africa.

SA business confidence slips further in Q3

SOUTH African business confidence slipped a point further sequentially in the third quarter of 2025, weighed down by hefty U.S. tariffs on the country's exports, a survey showed on Wednesday.

Business confidence fell to 39 points, three points below the long-term average level of 42, according to a survey by the Rand Merchant Bank and compiled by the Bureau of Economic Research.

The survey, conducted from August 6 to 25, coincided with the start of the 30 per cent tariff - Sub-Saharan Africa's highest rate - on Johannesburg's U.S. exports and was also marked by cancellations and production breaks in the country's automotive sector.

But South Africa's business experience in recent quarters was not out of line with other

economies, according to Isaah Mhlanga, Chief Economist at RMB.

"Last year brought significant political and economic policy changes in many countries, including South Africa, and following initial excitement, or in some cases, disappointment, conditions are normalising into a difficult emerging global world order," Mhlanga said.

However, another survey published on Wednesday showed South African businesses experienced a very modest improvement in operating conditions in August as cost pressures eased.

Separately, the South African rand hit a nine-month high in late August, boosted by a weaker dollar and rebound in gold prices, after U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell pointed to a possible rate cut at the central bank's September meeting. (Reuters)

OPEC+ to consider further oil output hike on Sunday, sources say

By Alex Lawler and Olesya Astakhova

LONDON/MOSCOW — Eight OPEC+ members will consider further raising oil production at a meeting on Sunday, two sources familiar with the discussions said, as the group seeks to regain market share.

OPEC+ has reversed its strategy of output cuts from April and has already raised quotas by about 2.5 million barrels per day, about 2.4 per cent of world demand, to boost market share and under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to lower oil prices.

But those increases have failed to bring down oil prices, which traded near \$68 a barrel supported by Western sanctions on Russia and Iran, encouraging further production gains in rivals such as the United States.

Another output boost would mean OPEC+, which pumps about half of the world's oil, would be starting to unwind a second layer of cuts of about 1.65 million barrels per day, or 1.6 per cent of world demand, more than a year ahead of schedule.

Eight OPEC+ countries are due to hold an online meeting on Sunday expected to decide on October output. OPEC+ includes the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries plus Russia and other allies.

There is also a chance, some analysts and an OPEC+ source said, that OPEC+ could pause the increases for October. A final decision has not been made, the OPEC+ source said.

OPEC headquarters and authorities in Saudi Arabia did not immediately respond to requests for comment.



▲ A view of the logo of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) outside their headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

Brent crude was trading near \$68 on Wednesday, down over 1 per cent on the day but up from a 2025 low of near \$58 in April.

As well as sanctions, the OPEC+ hikes falling short of the pledged amounts have also supported prices, analysts have said.

Until April, OPEC+ had been curtailing production for several years to support oil prices.

At their last meeting in August, the eight members raised production by 547,000 bpd for September, completing a total increase in output for the year of 2.5 mln bpd. That included a 300,000 bpd additional production allocation for the UAE.

The next output cut layer of 1.65 million bpd is in place until the end of 2026, as is another 2 million bpd of cuts by the whole group. (Reuters)



▲ This Trade Fair special is not just about lowering prices, it is about bringing the future of connectivity closer to emaSwati.



▲ The 5G router that's on special.

ESWATINI Mobile has dropped the price of its 5G Router from E3,300 to just E2,500 cash, making high-speed connectivity more affordable than ever.

Customers also have the option of taking it on a contract at only E100 per month for 24 months, bundled with Unlimited Fixed Wireless.

This Trade Fair special is not just about lowering prices, it is about bringing the future of connectivity closer to emaSwati. The 5G Router gives customers faster internet speeds, more reliability, and the ability to stream, work, and connect without interruptions.

Opportunities

In an interview, Eswatini Mobile Head of Commercial, Nosipho Xaba said the router is more than a gadget, it is a gateway to digital inclusion. In a world where access to the internet determines access to education, business opportunities, healthcare information, and financial services, Eswatini Mobile is committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

"By making the 5G Router more affordable, the company is bridging the digital divide between urban and rural communities, young and old, businesses and individuals," Xaba said.

Xaba noted that digital inclusion means that students can now research and study from home, small businesses can sell online, and families can stay connected to the world in real time. It is about creating equal opportunities for everyone through technology.

"The world is in the middle of a new Industrial Revolution driven by technology. From artificial intelligence and smart homes to e-commerce and mobile banking, fast and reliable connectivity is at the heart of this transformation. Es-

watini cannot afford to be left behind," she continued. Eswatini Mobile believes that investing in 5G is about future-proofing the country and positioning emaSwati to take part in the global economy. The router works on both 4G and 5G, making it flexible for today while preparing customers for tomorrow. The 5G element is particularly geared towards customers along the Manzini corridor, where Eswatini Mobile has rolled out faster and more seamless connectivity. By upgrading to the 5G Router, customers in these areas can experience internet speeds that match global standards, while still enjoying strong 4G connectivity where 5G is not yet available.

Xaba elaborated further that this Trade Fair special is more than just a promotion, it is an investment in the country's digital future. By lowering the cost of the 5G Router, Eswatini Mobile is making it easier for emaSwati to join the digital world and benefit from the opportunities that come with it.

"Connectivity is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. Therefore, with the new E2,500 cash price or the E100 contract option, Eswatini Mobile is ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to stay connected, work smarter, and live better," added Xaba.

Eswatini Mobile slashes 5G router price in Trade Fair Special



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12 Months
Contract Duration

Unlimited Data

Unlimited
On-net Minutes

100
Off-net Minutes

E795 **UNLIMITED** **HOME FW**
Monthly

12 Months
Contract Duration

Unlimited Data

Unlimited
On-net Minutes

200
Off-net Minutes

E995 **UNLIMITED** **HOME FW**
Monthly

12 Months
Contract Duration

Unlimited Data

Unlimited
On-net Minutes

300
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Google avoids break up

... but has to give up exclusive search deals in antitrust trial

GOOGLE will not be forced to break up its search business, but a federal judge has tentatively ordered other changes to the tech giant's business practices to keep it from further anticompetitive behavior.

U.S. District Court Judge Amit P. Mehta outlined remedies on Tuesday that would bar Google from entering or maintaining exclusive deals that tie the distribution of Search, Chrome, Google Assistant, or Gemini to other apps or revenue arrangements. For example, Google wouldn't be able to condition Play Store licensing on the distribution of certain apps, or tie revenue-share payments to keeping certain apps.

Google will also have to share certain search index and user-interaction data with "qualified competitors" to prevent exclusionary behavior, and it must offer search and search ad syndication services to competitors at standard rates so they can deliver quality results while building their own technology.

Mehta has not yet issued a final judgment. Instead, he ordered Google and the Department of Justice to "meet and confer" and submit a revised final judgment by September 10 that aligns with his opinion.

The behavioral remedies come a year after Mehta ruled that Google acted illegally to maintain a monopoly in online search. A technical committee will be established to help enforce the final judgment, which will last six years and go into effect 60 days after entry.

The DOJ, which filed its antitrust suit against Google in 2020, had advocated for stronger penalties. It wanted to force Google to divest its Chrome browser and possibly Android, which resulted in some unsolicited acquisition bids, and end its agreements with Apple, Samsung, and other partners in which the tech giant paid those companies billions to make its search engine appear as the default choice on their devices and web browsers.



▲ Google will not be forced to break up its search business.

Apple stock popped after-hours on the news that it could continue its lucrative agreement with Google. Google spent more than \$26 billion in 2021 alone to secure default search placements on devices, and about \$18 billion of that spend went solely to Apple, with whom Google shares 36% of its search ad revenue from Safari. The next year, Google paid Apple more than \$20 billion, per the terms of its distribution agreement.

During the trial, the judge emphasized that because most users stick with the default, those placements are "extremely valuable real estate" that effectively locked rivals out and knee-capped their ability to challenge Google's monopoly.

The DOJ also called on Judge Mehta to force Google to share its search index, user-side data, synthetic queries, and ads data with competitors under privacy-protected

terms.

Google, which has maintained roughly a 90% market share over the traditional search market for the last decade, has argued that the government's proposals would stifle innovation, jeopardize user privacy, and undercut the company's ability to invest in R&D. CEO Sundar Pichai said during the remedies hearing in April that forced data-sharing would act as "de facto divestiture" for Google Search.

During the remedies hearing in April, Judge Mehta suggested he would consider Europe's Digital Markets Act as a reference point. The DMA requires Google to share certain click and query data with third parties. Mehta's order, by contrast, is narrower and temporary, unlike the DMA's ongoing obligations. It's also much more limited than the sweeping access the DOJ

requested, which potentially included source code, full search ranking algorithms, and broader infrastructure elements, which Google has said would essentially give away its entire intellectual property.

"This has inspired a big debate about whether Europeans with the Digital Markets Act have it right," William Kovacic, a global competition law professor at George Washington University and former Federal Trade Commission commissioner, told TechCrunch. "That is, do you need descriptive rules, or do you rely on the technical case by case adjudication?"

Put another way: "Does the European experience tell us something about feasibility and implementation here. Does it tell us something about what Google can live with?"

That same question around how far regulators should go in reshaping Google's business will also loom large in the tech giant's other antitrust battles.

Judge Mehta's decision may also affect the outcome of a separate antitrust trial Google is currently engaged in in relation to its advertising technology business. In April 2025, Judge Leonie Brinkema found that Google illegally monopolized ad-tech markets. The remedies trial is scheduled for late September and will focus on the DOJ's proposed divestitures and other measures.

"We've never had a circumstance in which the Department of Justice has had two largely parallel cases involving major elements of alleged misconduct against the same dominant firm with two parallel remedy processes going ahead," Kovacic said. Kovacic added that even though Mehta has released his much-anticipated remedies, "there are many acts to this play to go" in the form of Google's appeal and potential escalation to the Supreme Court. "It won't be over until late 2027 or early 2028," he said. (TechCrunch)

Tesla's 4th 'Master Plan' reads like LLM-generated nonsense

TESLA has published its fourth "Master Plan," and at a high level it is about how the company wants to lead the charge into planet-wide adoption of humanoid robots and sustainable energy.

But the post lacks an important building block of plans: specifics.

Even CEO Elon Musk agrees. In one of his only posts about the plan since it was published on Monday — sandwiched in between a steady stream of transphobia and immigration panic — he agreed it was fair to criticize the lack of specifics and said the company will add more.

Who knows when that will happen? But right now, unlike the preceding master plan posts, this one is gauzy, generic, and reads like someone threw talking points from Musk and the "Abundance bros" into ChatGPT and published the result. (If it was Grok, it's one of the most benign posts that AI chatbot has ever generated.)

The post is stuffed with sentences that sound like a kid imitating college-level discourse, such as: "The hallmark of meritocracy is creating opportunities that

enable each person to use their skills to accomplish whatever they imagine."

Why be so vague? Maybe it's because Tesla has still not completed all of its goals from the second master plan, published all the way back in 2016, or from its third, in 2023.

That second plan was also about taking huge swings, but it was specific in its ambitions. First, Musk wrote that Tesla would "create a smoothly integrated and beautiful solar-roof-with-battery product that just works" and "scale that throughout the world." Tesla has a solar roof product, but it has been plagued by problems, redesigned multiple times, and has not reached any real scale in the U.S., let alone around the world.

(Musk used this part of Master Plan 2 to justify Tesla's recent offer to acquire SolarCity, a struggling company run by his cousins. Tesla spent years in court defending the acquisition and ultimately prevailed.)

On the vehicle side, Musk promised in Plan 2 to bring a compact SUV, semitruck, pickup, and an electric bus to market. Tesla accomplished the first piece of that with the Model Y, which has proven extremely

popular.

But the Tesla Semi is still in development, the Cybertruck has failed to come close to its own sales goals, and the company has not expanded beyond those form factors into anything resembling a bus.

The final two prongs of the second Master Plan was to make Teslas fully autonomous via a software upgrade and to allow owners to add or subtract them to a large, shared network. Neither of those goals have been met.

The company is testing a small, invite-only robotaxi service in Austin, Texas, but the cars all have safety monitors riding in the front passenger seat. And Tesla has gone through multiple hardware revisions in the last nine years that, by Musk's own admission, likely means an enormous number of cars already on the road do not, as promised, have the right tech to become fully autonomous. (The first and second Master Plans have been removed from Tesla's website as part of a larger purge.)

(TechCrunch)



▲ Billionaire businessman Elon Musk.

AFGHANISTAN airdropped commandos on Wednesday to pull survivors from the rubble in areas ravaged by earthquakes that have killed more than 1,400 this week, as a U.N. agency warned that food aid for victims would run out soon without urgent funding.

Dozens of commando forces were being airdropped at sites where helicopters cannot land, to help carry the injured to safer ground, in what aid groups said was a race against time to rescue those still stuck under rubble.

Time was also running out for those who survived the two devastating quakes in the remote eastern region of the impoverished country, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) warned on Wednesday.

John Aylieff, the head of WFP in Afghanistan, told Reuters that the agency only has enough funding and stocks for the next four weeks.

“Four weeks is just not enough even to meet the basic, essential needs of the population struck by the earthquake, let alone put the victims on a path back to rebuilding their lives,” Aylieff said.

WFP funding for Afghanistan this year is just under \$300 million, according to U.N. financial data, down from \$1.7 billion in 2022, the first full year the country was ruled by the Taliban.

Resources for rescue and relief work are tight in the nation of 42 million people hit by war, poverty and shrinking aid. It has received limited global help after the disaster.

The first earthquake of magnitude 6, one of Afghanistan’s deadliest in recent years, unleashed widespread damage and

Afghanistan airdrops commandos to rescue earthquake survivors

... United Nations warns food may run out



▲ Red Crescent volunteers walk next to damaged houses as they reach Lulam village to help the victims following a deadly magnitude-6 earthquake that struck Afghanistan on Sunday, in Nurgal district, Kunar province, Afghanistan, destruction when it struck the provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar around midnight on Sunday at a shallow depth of 10 km (6 miles). A second quake of magnitude 5.5 on Tuesday evening caused panic and interrupted rescue efforts as it sent rocks sliding down mountains and cut off roads to villages in remote areas.

The toll stands at 1,457 deaths, 3,394 injuries and more than 6,700 destroyed homes, the Taliban administration said. The

U.N. has said the toll could rise, with people still trapped under rubble.

Authorities have set up a camp to coordinate supplies and emergency aid, while two centres were overseeing transfer of the injured, burial of the dead and the rescue of survivors, Ehsanullah Ehsan, the head of disaster management in Kunar, said in a text message.

“What we really need is air support, helicopters. Tragically WFP had a

helicopter...until a few months ago when funding cuts put an end to that,” Aylieff said.

Afghanistan has been badly hit by U.S. President Donald Trump’s funding cuts to foreign aid, while donor frustration over the Taliban’s restrictive policies towards women and curbs on aid workers have worsened its isolation.

In some villages in Kunar province, entire households were wiped out. Survivors sifted through rubble looking for families, carried bodies on woven stretchers and dug graves with pickaxes. In Lulam village, one of the hardest-hit, Darbar, a 63-year-old woman who goes by one name, said she and her family had been waiting for aid for three days since the earthquake destroyed their house.

“No one even hears our voices,” she said, perched on a traditional wood-and-rope bed, adding that she had been injured on the chest. “Now we are just sitting with hope in God. We have no house, nothing to eat.”

On the nearby mountain road, trucks carrying sacks of flour or men with shovels could be seen on their way to villages even worse hit. Ruhila Mateen from Aseel, a humanitarian tech platform that has teams on the ground, said conditions were worsening by the hour for survivors, with women and children especially vulnerable.

Flimsy or poorly-built homes made of dry masonry, stone and timber gave little protection from the quakes, in ground left unstable by days of heavy rain, said the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (Reuters)

Eskom’s R54 billion settlement: what it means for South African households

EXPERTS are warning that South Africans should prepare to sit with even heavier electricity bills in the coming years, as the controversial R54 billion settlement between Eskom and the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) locks in tariff hikes that will hit both households and municipalities. The settlement, reached in July after Eskom took NERSA’s sixth Multi-Year Price Determination (MYPD6) decision on review, allows Eskom to recover billions in additional revenue after errors were discovered in the regulator’s calculations.

The phased recovery will translate into extra increases of 3.4% in 2026/27 and 2.64% in 2027/28, pushing total tariff hikes for those years to 8.76% and 8.83% respectively.

While NERSA insists the agreement is “a fair and balanced resolution,” consumer groups, municipalities, and energy experts have blasted the deal, saying it unfairly shifts the cost of Eskom’s inefficiencies and mismanagement onto ordinary South Africans.

Charles Hlebela, NERSA’s Head of Communication, said the settlement followed Eskom’s review application after a R107 billion revenue shortfall was identified.

“Following an assessment of Eskom’s review application, NERSA identified errors that resulted in underestimation in certain components of Eskom’s application. After rectifying these errors, NERSA concluded that Eskom was entitled to an additional R54 billion over the three-year MYPD6 period, an amount substantially lower than Eskom’s original claim of R107 billion,” he explained.



▲ Sunset in Crownmines, Johannesburg.

He stressed that the agreement avoided “prolonged litigation” and phased the increases to “mitigate immediate tariff shocks to consumers.”

NERSA full-time regulator member for electricity, Nomfundo Maseti, said, “This settlement agreement represents a fair and balanced resolution. It safeguards the interests of South African electricity consumers while addressing Eskom’s legitimate revenue requirements to ensure operational sustainability.”

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) expressed alarm, warning that the hikes would deepen poverty and cripple already stretched municipal finances.

“These tariff hikes are not just numbers on a page, they risk pushing households into deeper poverty, crippling municipal finances, and widening inequality,” said SALGA president Bheke Stofile.

SALGA highlighted that municipalities rely heavily on electricity revenues to cross-subsidise other services, and steeper tariffs of-

ten result in illegal connections, reduced compliance, and heightened community dissatisfaction.

The Association called for urgent reforms, including government subsidies to protect poor households and vulnerable municipalities, acceleration of electricity sector reform and Eskom restructuring, and a tariff framework that balances Eskom’s needs with consumer affordability. “Passing the cost of mismanagement, historic inefficiencies, and policy delays onto consumers cannot be the solution,” SALGA stressed.

Activist group STOP COCT said the hikes prove consumers are continually punished for Eskom’s inefficiencies.

“STOP COCT regularly receives compelling complaints from members of the public not being able to foot Eskom and municipalities’ huge electricity bills,” said founder Sandra Dickson.

She warned: “Without urgent measures, tariff hikes alone will definitely increase hardship in every household in the country.”

Dickson added that households turning to renewables should not face additional penalties: “Households should not be punished with fixed costs for implementing solar solutions in their homes.” She said Eskom and municipalities should incentivise rather than penalise such efforts.

(IOL)

Dickies Party fever takes over

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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THE countdown is officially on, and all roads lead to Dé Lounge this Saturday, September 6, 2025, for what promises to be one of the most stylish and electrifying parties of the season, the Dickies Party with Matamza.

The iconic Dickies brand has long been a cultural symbol across the globe, finding its way from workwear to streetwear, and from streetwear to nightlife fashion. Now, Eswatini's entertainment scene is gearing up to fuse fashion, music, and unfiltered vibes under one roof, as Dé Lounge (formerly Mega Lounge) hosts this highly anticipated event.

At the heart of the celebration there is none other than Matamza, a powerhouse known for his electrifying stage presence and dynamic sound. Whether it's spinning beats that send shivers down the spine or curating a vibe that keeps the dancefloor alive until sunrise, Matamza has become a name synonymous with unrelenting energy.

The Dickies Party is armed with a supporting cast of some of the hottest names on the local scene. Expect fire sets from Uncle Karly, Mbo, Sgitha, Sbu De Drum DJ, The Bishop, TK, Chester, Lord F, It's All Blaq, Master Jack, Crooks, Bobstar, Tibza, Cybos, Miss T, Best Due, Tilungu, Baba, Ur Cousin Phayo, and BK.

This diverse lineup promises something for everyone, from deep house and amapiano, to hip-hop and soulful mixes, it's going to be a night where genres meet,



▲ DJ Matamza.

collide, and blend seamlessly to create unforgettable moments.

Of course, no Dickies Party is complete without the right look. The official dress code is Dickies wear, making the event as much about fashion as it is about music.

Statement

For many, Dickies represents more than clothing, it's a statement of culture, resilience, and authenticity.

Expect to see overalls, work pants, branded tees, and stylish accessories reimagined under the glow of nightclub

lights. It's a celebration of identity and creativity, proving that fashion is not just worn but lived.

In true Eswatini party spirit, revellers are encouraged to bring their cooler boxes at E100 between 1 pm and 4 pm. However, there's a catch, no spirits in bottles will be allowed, ensuring safety and smooth vibes for everyone. After 4 pm, the venue's fully stocked bar will take care of every thirst, from cocktails to local favourites. The event is designed to be accessible, with a cover charge of just E30 after 2 pm.

National Gospel Music Awards:

Mzayoni leads with 7 nominations

THE National Gospel Music Awards (NGMA) 2025 season has officially launched with a dazzling Nominees Announcement event held at the Gables Movie Zone in Ezulwini.

Among the many highlights of the night was the overwhelming presence of Mzayoni, who emerged as the standout figure by securing an impressive seven nominations across various categories.

Mzayoni's dominance at the nominations signals not only his artistic excellence but also the deep connection his music has forged with audiences. When asked about his success, Mzayoni shared his enthusiasm, saying, "When it's your season, it's your season. I am humbled and grateful for the recognition and encourage my fans to vote now that the voting lines are officially open."

The event also marked a triumphant return for Nothando Hlophe, who earned multiple nods including Best Song, Best Female Artist, Best Artist, and Best of Africa. Alongside her, Sphiwo Ndoni also garnered significant attention with several nominations. Stanley Dlamini, CEO of the Eswatini National Council of Arts and Culture, spoke to the broader significance of

the awards.

He emphasised that the nominees represent the rich diversity and quality of gospel music emanating from Eswatini and beyond. "The nominees are a true representation of what we can offer in Eswatini at a regional level. Seeing artists like Dudu Mhlanga, Mciniseli Tembe, and Hlobisile nominated more than once shows that it does not matter where you come from; when your music reaches the people, they will nominate you," Dlamini remarked.

Importance

The launch was further enriched by the presence of gospel music legends, including Sipho "Big Fish" Makhabane, who underscored the importance of nurturing the next generation of gospel artists. "Seeing legends like Nduduzo and myself as part of this launch gives hope to the upcoming gospel artists," he said. "It is important to pass the baton to the next generation."

With voting lines now officially open, artists and fans alike are urged to participate actively in selecting the winners. The voting period will close on November 1, 2025, for most categories, while the Best Male Artist, Best Female Artist, and Best Artist categories will remain open until 8 pm on the awards



▲ Mzayoni.

night, November 8, 2025. The culmination of this process will be an elegant awards ceremony celebrating the achievements of gospel music's finest talents.



▲ The Bishop.

The Bishop for Eswatini Farmers Market

THE Eswatini Farmers Market is set to return with a spectacular lineup and vibrant cultural festivities, featuring Eswatini star The Bishop.

The event will be headlined by South African producer and DJ, Mörda. 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."

Tickets

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. 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.

Timothy, Thabile Myeni join Carnival City event

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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RENOWNED Eswatini gospel legends Timothy Myeni and Thabile Myeni prepare to grace the stage at the highly anticipated “Nothing Is Impossible With God” double live recording event.

Scheduled for October 31, 2025, at the iconic Carnival City in Johannesburg, this event promises an unforgettable evening of worship, inspiration, and musical excellence starting from 7 pm. The “Nothing Is Impossible With God” event is set to be a landmark occasion, featuring an impressive lineup of gospel luminaries alongside the Myeni siblings. Esteemed artists such as Xolly Mncwango, Donnie McClurkin, Vashawn Mitchell, Collen Maluleke, Sneizey, Xola Toto, and Takie Ndou will join the celebration, promising a rich tapestry of gospel sounds and styles that will uplift and inspire attendees.

Tickets for this extraordinary event are priced at E350, offering gospel music enthusiasts a chance to witness live performances from some of the most influential voices in the genre. The double live recording format adds a special dimension, capturing the energy and spirit of the night for posterity and wider audiences beyond the venue.

Timothy Myeni, a celebrated gospel artist and the visionary founder and lead singer of the Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors gospel group, has long been a beacon of soulful gospel music. Since establishing the group in 2004, Timothy has cultivated a unique sound deeply rooted in the rich umbholoha vocal tradition, characterised by its



▲ Gospel artist Timothy Myeni.

rhythmic, rolling harmonies and heartfelt spiritual messages. His leadership has propelled Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors to the forefront of gospel music, earning acclaim for their authentic and moving performances that resonate with audiences across Southern Africa.

Award-winning

Joining him is Thabile Myeni, a gifted cofounder of the award-winning family ensemble Nandweni Christ Ambassadors.

Raised in the Lubombo region’s village of eNcandweni, Thabile’s upbringing in a devout Christian household as the tenth of eleven siblings instilled in her a profound spiritual foundation and a passion for gospel music. Starting her singing journey at the tender age of eight alongside her brothers Timothy and Mzwakhe Myeni, Thabile has nurtured her vocal talents within the close-knit family group, contributing to their widespread recognition and success.

Touch Of Soul to ignite ‘Gqom v Soul’ Experience

THE music scene in Eswatini is set to ignite once again as the talented DJ Touch Of Soul is set to take centre stage at Espinho Lounge in Siteki.

This highly anticipated performance will be part of the dynamic “Gqom v Soul” event scheduled for September 6, 2025, starting from 5 pm and continuing late into the night. Alongside DJ Touch Of Soul, the event will showcase the skills of DJ So What and Lungsta Da Deepsta, promising an electrifying fusion of sounds that will captivate partygoers and music enthusiasts alike.

The “Gqom v Soul” event is more than just a night of entertainment; it is a celebration of musical diversity and cultural expression. Gqom, a genre originating from South Africa, is known for its raw, pulsating beats and energetic rhythms, while soul music offers a rich, emotive counterbalance. By bringing these two vibrant styles together, the event aims to create a dynamic atmosphere where different musical traditions meet and interact, offering attendees a truly memorable experience.

Entry to the event is set at an accessible price of E50 for all guests, encouraging a broad audience to partake in the festivities. To maintain a stylish and safe environment, the organisers have implemented a dress code policy that prohibits flops, vests, and hats, ensuring that the venue maintains a certain standard of decorum and fashion.



▲ Touch of Soul.

DJ Touch Of Soul has earned a reputation as a visionary force within Eswatini’s music landscape. As a DJ, producer, and music curator, he is known for his ability to craft immersive sonic experiences that transcend the ordinary. His musical style is deeply rooted in soulful, Afro, and deep house genres, where rhythm and emotion merge seamlessly to tell compelling stories

through sound.

This unique blend allows him to connect with audiences on a profound level, creating moments of shared energy and inspiration. Beyond his musical talents, DJ Touch Of Soul is also recognised as an entrepreneur and creative visionary who is actively shaping the future of music, fashion, and events in Eswatini.



▲ DJ Cup.

Spring comes alive at 23:28 Lounge

THE scent of fresh beginnings is in the air, and in Eswatini, spring is not just a season, it’s a mood.

On Friday, September 5, 2025, 23:28 Lounge at Checkers is set to officially welcome the warmer days with an electrifying event aptly titled “Hello Spring Time.” From 6 pm sharp, the venue promises to transform into a garden of beats, flavours, and laughter. The event is not only a party but also a declaration that spring has indeed sprung in the Kingdom.

The night will feature a special set of performances by some of Eswatini’s finest DJs and entertainers. Headlining the decks is the celebrated DJ Cup (ESW), whose infectious mixes are known to keep dance floors buzzing into the early hours. Joining him is the dynamic Dope Deep, a maestro of smooth yet powerful house beats, and Young Love, whose unique sound has steadily carved a space in the local music scene.

Celebration

Of course, what’s a spring celebration without food and drinks? Guests can expect delicious bites and refreshing cocktails available throughout the night, all designed to pair perfectly with the upbeat vibes of the season. Another highlight is the fact that entry is free. Yes, in an age where every fun night seems to come with a heavy price tag, 23:28 Lounge has boldly declared this celebration a “No Cover Charge” affair. All you need is your spring spirit and a willingness to dance the night away.

So, if you’re looking for the perfect way to shake off the winter blues and embrace the season of blossoms, 23:28 Lounge is the place to be this Friday. The beats will be fresh, the drinks cold, and the energy hotter than the spring sun. After all, spring only comes once a year, but the memories made under its influence last a lifetime.

VETERAN actress Vatiswa Ndara has accused the broadcasting industry of sidelining her.

Ndara reveals this information in her upcoming autobiography, *Unfiltered 2*, which delves into the less glamorous realm of show business.

“One can confidently say that I have been blacklisted. The tricky thing about being blacklisted, though, is that one can’t really prove it.

“The telltale signs are there that you’ve been blacklisted, but how do you prove it? I don’t think broadcasters and producers are dumb enough to expose their malicious ways by having a blacklist dossier, especially for someone who’s done nothing wrong,” writes Ndara.

She is articulate, eloquent, and talented, yet struggling to secure an acting job due to being too vocal and outspoken about the flaws of South African show business.

Ndara released the first version of her book two years ago, and she is set to release the second edition of her autobiography, titled *Unfiltered: My Unglamorous Odyssey in the World of South African Entertainment*, in October.

The book will lay bare her experiences of love, loss, grief, depression, suicide, and the toxicity that exists in the film and broadcasting industry.

The price of knowing your worth, Ndara

Vatiswa Ndara accuses industry of ‘blacklisting’ her

says, is that she has been blacklisted from the film industry and doubts she will ever be cast for a role again.

The former YFM and Metro FM news anchor has gone from being a sought-after news anchor on the biggest radio stations to playing some of the most prominent roles on television. It was in 2023 that she opened up about refusing to sleep her way to an even higher position. She detailed how a manager invited himself to her home and made sexual advances.

When she reported the matter to the Media Workers Association of South Africa, things started to go downhill for her career, she says. In the previous book, she shared that after she reported the sexual harassment case at the SABC, she was shot at. She survived two bullets to her hip and another that missed her spinal cord.

Ndara later unpacked how actor and production boss Peter Sephuma allegedly groped her in the workplace. She was barred from the SABC Africa offices and lost her income.

These circumstances led her to leave

the job as a newsreader and pursue acting, which she nailed.

In her upcoming book, she details how she survived suicide, depression, and unemployment due to “industry blacklisting”.

“Instead, when there are no roles allocated in the direction of the blacklisted person, the decision-makers can easily blame that on the scarcity of roles suitable for ‘Mr or Ms Blacklisted’,” she writes in the book extract. “In 2020 I confronted Mzansi Magic, seeking confirmation that they had blacklisted me. I did this after a producer informed me that he was denied casting me for a role in his new show.

“However, the allegation was swiftly denied. Lufuno Nethengwe, MNet’s head of drama, assured me that the channel had no issues with me.

“He explained that the decision to reject the producer’s casting choice was not due to blacklisting but rather a matter of ensuring the right fit for the role. Was this their subtle way of telling me I couldn’t act?”

(IOL)



▲ Veteran actress Vatiswa Ndara.

Nobuhle and Kabza De Small infuse spirituality into Amapiano

SOUTH African singer Nobuhle has released her latest single, “Umusa”, a collaboration with Kabza De Small that blends spirituality, soul and the emotion of Amapiano into a compelling track.

Nobuhle was born and raised in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal. She is a Music and Drama graduate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and is now focused on creating spiritual music that connects with people.

Speaking to “Independent Media Lifestyle”, Nobuhle said she has been working with De Small since 2022.

“We’ve created songs like ‘Liyangishonela’ and ‘Xola’ together over the years, so it’s no surprise that ‘Umusa’ came together naturally.”

The song is a prayer, a plea to God for strength and guidance.

“One of the things I love about working with Kabza is the space we meet each other in - a spiritual space rooted in African drums, improvisation and a shared love for music,” Nobuhle said.

Nobuhle is also preparing to release another new single, “Amakhosi”, with Casswell P this Friday.

In November, she will release “Izintaba”, featuring Young Stunna, ahead of her full album rollout. Her upcoming album, “Imvula Rebirth”, will feature contributions from Nkosazana Daughter, Stunna, Oskido and others.

At its core, “Umusa” is a song of supplication, a

call for protection, strength and grace during difficult times.

Nobuhle’s vocals move through De Small’s layered production, combining deep log drums, ambient synths and Amapiano rhythms. Her voice carries both vulnerability and power, threading through the track like prayer through silence.

“This track is special to me,” Nobuhle said. “It’s more than just music; it’s a spiritual moment. I wanted to create something that could comfort people and give them strength when they feel like giving up.

“That’s what ‘Umusa’ is: a song for anyone going through something, a reminder that they are not alone.”

Working with De Small, she said, was a transformative experience.

“Working with Kabza has been one of the most inspiring moments of my career. His ability to create not just beats but moods is something I’ll carry with me forever.”

“He listens deeply, works intentionally and makes space for the music to breathe. He’s humble, collaborative and completely devoted to the sound. Our session felt like a shared spiritual experience.”

As fans embrace “Umusa”, Nobuhle hinted that more is coming.

(Sunday World)



▲ Singer Nobuhle.



▲ Meghan Markle.

Meghan Markle’s pop-up style store vanishes

EARLIER this year, Meghan Markle quietly introduced a ShopMy page on Instagram, inviting followers into her personal style universe.

Her profile once carried the message: “A handpicked and curated collection of the things I love - I hope you enjoy them!” It featured everything from elevated linen shirts and casual tees to designer staples, curated in neutral tones that matched her Californian-inspired style.

Prominent labels included Saint Laurent, Emme Parsons, Maya Brenner, Heidi Merrick, J.Crew, Uniqlo, and Gap. There were also homeware, beauty bits, and children’s items.

But today, the page displays nothing but a blank slate, stating simply: “This curator has not yet added any collections.”

The sudden emptiness has baffled fans, especially since Meghan had only recently described the endeavour to Bloomberg as “an interesting exploration”* that allowed people to find and emulate her style.

When she launched the ShopMy venture, royal insiders reportedly viewed it as an awkward blend of celebrity commerce with royal branding - some even calling it “shameless.”

Rather than align with traditional royal restraint, Meghan’s page signalled a distinctly modern, monetised spin on style influence.

The platform offered attractive affiliate commissions - up to 30% on referred sales.

It featured high-price items such as a Loro Piana cashmere sweater priced around \$1,415 (R27,100) and a Heidi Merrick silk dress at \$1,350 (R25,900).

The abrupt disappearance comes on the heels of her lifestyle venture American Riviera Orchard quietly disappearing earlier in the year, marking this as the second shuttered project.

Some observers speculate this may be part of a strategic shift - perhaps paving the way for a new fashion or beauty line under her “As Ever” brand.

(IOL)



READY to leave your current gym in the dust or start your fitness journey?

Use this guide to help set your priorities straight, so you can try to find the right gym for you.

Health and wellness touch everyone's life differently. The views and opinions expressed are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of Healthline Media. All quotes are strictly informational and should not be considered medical advice.

Whether you're looking to get into fitness or make a switch from your current gym, a gym that fits most or all of your needs is out there. We created this guide to help you organize your priorities and find it.

How much do you want to pay for a membership?

Monthly or annual fees might be the biggest limiting factor for choosing a gym.

Considering how much you're willing to pay is a good starting point, so you don't find a gym that you like but discover that it's out of your budget.

Conversely, you may find a gym that you really like and decide that you're willing to dish out a little more money because it checks every box.

Editor Emery Wright uses this exact mentality.

"I love being able to choose a different type of movement based on how my body feels. Plus, I can go use gym equipment for a self-guided workout whenever I want. My membership is a bit pricey, but it's an investment that I'm motivated to make the most of. The way I think about it, the more often I go, the lower my cost per gym session."

Similarly, editor Chloe Szilagyi says, "I joined my current gym in June. It's a bit pricier than other gyms locally, but I like that it has a wide range of classes at times that suit me."

What facilities or equipment do you want?

Looking for a gym with a track or swimming pool might narrow your search results, but it's good to know right away if having facilities such as these is a requirement for you.

Likewise, maybe you want a wide variety of weightlifting machines. Viewing pictures or videos of local gyms online can help you visualize if their equipment meets your needs.

For senior commerce editor Veronica Zambon, "My must-haves are a good selection of cardio and weight machines. I'm not confident enough to use free weights, and my joints thank me if I use a treadmill instead of the road when running.

"I've left other gyms before because the membership was expensive and didn't give me much — for example, one gym asked for the same price per month as my current one, but didn't give me access to all classes.

"Another reason I've left a gym before is that they only had communal open showers. I don't feel comfortable being naked in front of strangers, and was faced with either having to walk or catch public transport home in sweaty gym gear, or wearing something like a swimsuit underneath my clothes."

Is access to special features or classes a necessity?

How to choose a gym that fits your needs



This ties into how much you're willing to pay. Say you want access to a sauna, group classes, or one-on-one time with a fitness instructor. Some gyms might offer all three, but at a higher cost. Szilagyi says a gym floor is much less of a necessity than instructor-led and group classes, and the extra features, like a sauna, make it feel like she's getting more bang for her buck. If you mainly want fitness coaching or classes, you might benefit from a gym or studio that exclusively offers those. This way, you might receive more personalized and informed instruction. Commerce editor Catherine Conelly greatly appreciates this aspect of her yoga studio.

"I want to feel like the teachers and

trainers know what they are doing, not just trying to check a box. I've found one yoga studio I absolutely loved and consistently went to because the owner really knew her stuff. It wasn't just any other, move-through-each-pose-quickly kind of class. She took the time to break down poses into small steps and explained what was happening in your body and muscles."

Many gyms also offer tiered membership options, with the lowest tier giving access to the basics and the highest tier providing more exclusive access to special classes or equipment.

Will its hours of operation fit your schedule?

Some gyms offer 24-hour access, which can make it easier to fit in a workout at a time that best aligns with your schedule.

But locations that offer group fitness classes might follow a schedule. Depending on your day to day, you may be able to attend some of them.

The local studio that newsletter editor Morgan Mandriota attends offers classes at multiple times (and has several other benefits).

"I joined my local studio because it's 5 minutes away from home, fits within my budget, and (most importantly) meets my needs. The instructors are super knowledgeable, give very clear directions,

10 causes of blurry vision in the morning

and offer helpful modifications, and there are plenty of schedule options to choose from. The class size is small and intimate, so I'm not overwhelmed by a large group of people. Everyone there is always really kind, too. It's on the pricier side of how much I can spend per month, but it's worth the money because it checks off so many boxes."

Szilagyi says she's "left gyms when class schedules didn't work out for me, or when an introductory membership deal ended and the regular price didn't seem worth it."

How far are you willing to travel?

Going to a gym that doesn't require a long commute might encourage you to work out more consistently.

Medical editor Susan Mcbratney says, "I joined my gym because it's within walking distance and it's inexpensive. I bought some personal training sessions in the beginning. They focus on strength training and how to lift weights safely. This builds your confidence. Now I attend a couple of weekly classes for strength training."

But not everyone lives across the street or within reasonable walking or driving distance of their gym.

Maybe there's a gym near your work or where you run errands, so you can stop on your way home or before or after making a few errands.

Stacking a visit to the gym with another task can make it seem like less of a "wasted trip," which may help you stick with the habit in the long term.

More tips for selecting a gym

- Try a free trial: Contact the gyms you're interested in about offering a free trial or, if they don't offer one, ask for a tour of the grounds.
- **Read the contract:** Most gyms, especially chain gyms, require you to sign a contract upon joining. To avoid surprise fees or terms, make sure to read the contract thoroughly before signing.
 - **Check out reviews:** If the gym has a history of bad reviews, you might want to approach it with caution. But also be wary of online reviews, as people are more likely to leave reviews of negative experiences.
 - **Watch for sign-up promos:** Many gyms offer "first month free" promotions or something similar that might lock you into a membership. If you do sign up during a promo, make sure you understand the terms.
 - **Ask about accommodations:** If you have a disability or health condition that might make it difficult to use standard equipment, consider speaking with a gym representative to see what accessible equipment they offer.

The takeaway

No matter where you are in your fitness journey, finding a gym or studio that fits most or all of your wants is possible.

Before you find the right one, it might help to narrow down your priorities, such as price, distance from your home, and special equipment or features. You can start with an Internet search or by contacting gyms in your area. Friends and family who live nearby might also be able to provide some recommendations.

Healthline

BLURRY vision in one or both eyes in the morning happens to a lot of people.

In most cases, you have nothing to worry about, and clear vision will return after blinking or rubbing your eyes. Many people experience blurry vision in the morning for many reasons. Understanding why it happens is the key to discovering an effective treatment.

Here are 10 reasons why you might have blurred vision in the morning and what you can do about it.

Why you might have blurry vision in the morning

Whether you have blurry vision every morning after waking up or only sporadically, here's a look at the possible reasons.

Dry tears

Tears lubricate, nourish, and protect your eyes, and you're constantly producing tears even while asleep. Sometimes, however, your eyes may water at night for many reasons and the "tears" can dry on the surface of your eyes, causing blurry, hazy vision in the morning. Blinking a few times after waking up can remoisten your cornea and eliminate blurriness.

Eye allergies

Allergies can cause itchy, swollen, and watery eyes, as well as dry eyes, which can result in blurry vision after waking up.

If you experience worsening eye allergies in the mornings, the problem might be dust mites or pet dander in your bedroom. You might also be allergic to the detergent used to wash your bedding.

Sleeping on your face

Sleeping face down can cause floppy eyelid syndrome (FES), a condition in which the upper eyelid loses elasticity.

This can trigger blurry vision in the mornings, as well as tearing and eye burning. FES can happen to anyone, but it's more common in obese men.

Fuchs' corneal dystrophy

Fuchs' corneal dystrophy is an inherited condition that causes cornea swelling while asleep, resulting in cloudy vision in the mornings. Vision gradually improves throughout the day. It's more common in women than men, with symptoms typically developing around age 50.

Taking certain medications before bedtime

Antihistamines, sleeping aids, cold medicines, and high blood pressure



medication can reduce tear production while asleep. If taken before bed, you may experience blurry vision and dry eyes in the morning.

Sleeping with contact lenses

Sleeping in your contact lenses can reduce the oxygen supply to your eyes, leading to dry eyes and blurry vision after waking up. You should always take them out before falling asleep.

Drinking alcohol before bedtime

You might also have temporary blurriness in the mornings if you enjoyed a cocktail before bed. Alcohol causes dehydration, which can trigger dry eyes and blurred vision.

Blood sugar problems

Blood sugar that's too high or too low can also be the underlying cause of morning blurriness. In this case, however, you'll have other symptoms such as dizziness and weakness. High blood sugar can be an early warning sign of diabetes.

Oil gland problems

Sometimes, the tiny oil glands around your eyes, called the meibomian glands, produce too much oil and tears while asleep. This can lead to eye irritation and blurry vision in the morning.

Sleeping underneath a fan

Sleeping with a fan might provide the perfect nighttime room temperature. However, sleeping it can dry out your skin and eyes — even when your eyelids are closed. This can trigger itchy, irritated, and

blurry vision.

Do you need to see your doctor?

You don't need to see a doctor when blurriness goes away after blinking or rubbing your eyes, or when it's sporadic with a clear cause.

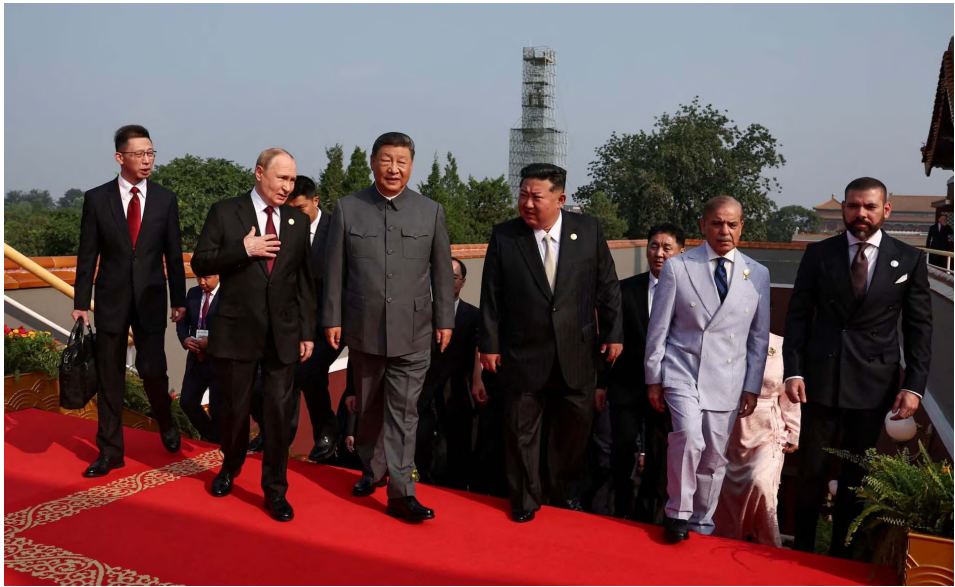
But you shouldn't ignore unexplained, persistent blurry vision, or vision problems accompanied by other symptoms. Make an appointment with your doctor for a diagnosis.

Blurry vision in the morning could be a sign of a stroke, which is a medical emergency. If you think you may be having a stroke, call 911.

- Recognizing the symptoms of a stroke in someone and getting emergency medical help can save their life and improve their outcome.
- Experts recommend you BE-FASTTrusted Source:
- **Balance:** Are they having trouble with balance or coordination?
 - **Eyes:** Are they experiencing visual symptoms, like double vision or blurry vision?
 - **Face:** Does one side of their face droop if they try to smile?
 - **Arms:** Can they lift both arms or is one arm weak or numb?
 - **Speech:** Is their speech slurred or difficult to understand?
 - **Time:** If any of the above symptoms are present, time to call 911 or your local emergency services.
- Prompt treatment is key to preventing permanent brain injury, long-term disability, or death. It's better to be overly cautious if you suspect a stroke.
- Don't be afraid to get emergency medical help if you think you recognize the signs of a stroke.

Healthline

News in pictures



▲ Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and heads of foreign delegations arrive for a military parade marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, in Beijing, China.



▲ Chinese President Xi Jinping stands in a car to review the troops during a military parade to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, in Beijing, China.



▲ Cast member Rebecca Ferguson poses on the red carpet during arrivals for the screening of the movie "A House of Dynamite" in competition, at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival.



▲ A man carrying his belongings on his head wades through a flooded road, after a rise in the water level of the Yamuna river due to heavy monsoon rains, in New Delhi, India.



▲ Pope Leo XIV sits on a BMW motorbike on the day of his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican.



▲ A group of camels ahead of the ritual in which, according to the herders, 1,200 camels are slaughtered in observance of Mawlid al-Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Mohammad, in Mogadishu, Somalia.



▲ Afghan boys sit on the rubble of a house following a deadly magnitude-6 earthquake that struck Afghanistan on Sunday, at Lulam village, in Nurgal district, Kunar province, Afghanistan.

‘International transfer spending hits record high of \$9.76 billion’

TRANSFER spending broke new ground in the close-season window when clubs around the world spent nearly \$10 billion on international transfers, global soccer body FIFA said in a report released on Wednesday.

Clubs recorded nearly 12,000 international transfers where total spending on fees amounted to \$9.76 billion, FIFA said, representing an increase of more than 50% compared to the same period in 2024. Women’s soccer also broke records with more than 1,100 international transfers where the fees exceeded \$12 million.

Orlando Pride signed winger Lizbeth Ovalle, who became the most expensive transfer in women’s football when the Mexican moved from Liga MX club side Tigres Femenil for a fee of \$1.5 million.

“We have observed a transfer market in full swing both in men’s and women’s football,” Emilio Garcia Silvero, FIFA’s Chief Legal & Compliance Officer, said in a statement.

“While this is a relevant development in men’s football a year ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026, the increasing figures in women’s football transfers are equally remarkable as they confirm the exponential growth of the women’s game at club level.” England’s Premier League was once again front and centre in the transfer market,



▲ Clubs recorded nearly 12,000 international transfers where total spending on fees amounted to \$9.76 billion.

spending more than \$3 billion in transfer fees in the last three months.

German clubs alone received \$893 million from their English counterparts, highlighted by Florian Wirtz’s move from Bayer Leverkusen to Liverpool in a deal reportedly worth 116 million pounds (\$156.70 million) with add-ons.

Liverpool also signed Hugo Ekitike from Eintracht Frankfurt while Newcastle United

signed German forward Nick Woltemade from VfB Stuttgart in a club-record deal, with both deals reported to be 69 million pounds.

Germany were second in total spending at \$980 million while Italy were third at \$950 million. In terms of incoming transfers, England had 535 players come in followed by Portugal (479) and Brazil (425).

(Reuters)



▲ Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah.

Salah slams fan ‘disrespect’ to ex-Liverpool forwards Nunez and Diaz

LIVERPOOL forward Mohamed Salah called out a popular fan account on Wednesday for “disrespecting” former teammates Luis Diaz and Darwin Nunez after a social media post mocked their close-season departures.

Salah took exception to a post on X featuring images of the departed duo in black-and-white over new signings Florian Wirtz and Alexander Isak with the caption: “Name a bigger upgrade in footballing history.” “How about we celebrate the great signings without disrespecting the PL (Premier League) champions?” Salah fired back on X, defending his fellow strikers who helped Liverpool claim their 20th league title.

The Anfield Edition site, which has more than half a million followers, quickly apologised.

“It wasn’t the intention to disrespect, more to highlight the incredible transfers this summer. But we’re sorry,” it posted with a picture of Salah on a throne.

The social media spat came after a summer of big-money moves that saw Colombian winger Diaz head to Bayern Munich for 75 million euros (\$87.80 million), while Nunez joined Saudi Arabia’s Al-Hilal for a reported 53 million euros. Liverpool then splashed the cash on replacements, signing Wirtz for 116 million pounds (\$156.70 million) with add-ons before smashing the British transfer record to bring in Isak for 125 million pounds.

While Diaz made a significant contribution to Liverpool’s title triumph with 13 goals and seven assists from 36 games, Nunez struggled to make his mark, netting only five times in 30 games.

Though he remained popular at Anfield for his work rate, Nunez faced harsh mockery on social media for missed chances.

Last month, Salah also took to social media to criticise UEFA’s tribute to the late Suleiman Al-Obeid, known as the “Palestinian Pele,” after European soccer’s governing body failed to reference the circumstances surrounding his death.

“Can you tell us how he died, where, and why?” Salah wrote. According to Obeid’s family, he was killed by an Israeli tank shell while queuing to collect food in Gaza. (Reuters)



Scheffler and McIlroy to captain December team event at Trump National

SCOTTIE Scheffler and Rory McIlroy, the top two ranked players in the world, will headline a rapid-fire team golf competition in December at U.S. President Donald Trump’s Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter, Florida, Golf Channel announced on Wednesday.

The Golf Channel Games, which will be held in primetime under the lights on December 17, will see Scheffler and McIlroy compete head-to-head and captain two four-man teams in timed and strategy-focused challenges.

“This will be a brand new way for the players and the fans to experience the game of golf,” Scheffler, who increased his major tally to four with wins at this year’s PGA Championship and British Open, said in a press release.

“Everyone knows how competitive we are and I think the

Golf Channel Games will be an innovative competition that will engage the viewers. I’m excited to be a part of this.”

According to Golf Channel, “world-class players” will compete in a timed drive, chip and putt challenge, a timed shoot-out, a closest-to-the-pin challenge and a captains’ challenge between Scheffler and McIlroy. The six remaining players in the event will be announced in the coming weeks.

“The Golf Channel Games bring a fresh approach to golf, inspired by events like the NFL Combine and All-Star Games from top professional leagues,” said Masters champion McIlroy.

“They give players the chance to showcase their skills across unique challenges and offer fans a new way to enjoy the game in the postseason. I am looking forward to competing in this new, fun format.”

(Reuters)

USTA brings social media creators courtside to amplify US Open content

THE U.S. Tennis Association has launched a dedicated credential program for social media creators at this year’s U.S. Open as part of a drive to court younger audiences, the USTA’s social media lead said.

Roughly 50 creators spanning food and beverage, lifestyle, entertainment, fashion and family niches have been accredited and are producing content at the tournament, Jonathan Zipper, who oversees social media at the USTA, told Reuters.

“We have a wide array of creators generating organic content through their unique lenses,” he said.

“They highlight all of the activities around the U.S. Open, not just the tennis, which of course is the centerpiece, but we’ve built what is essentially a creator playground on the grounds.

“So why not open it up to more creators to come showcase the U.S. Open and the sport of tennis?”

Cory Muroff, co-founder of OOTD, is documenting fashion at this year’s tournament and said the credential has given him easier access to the grounds plus perks like food and beverage.

“It just so happened that we were looking to explore

doing coverage of the U.S. Open and they were looking to bring more creators to the program,” he said. Muroff said OOTD, an acronym for “outfit of the day,” is focused on capturing stylish tennis fans as they stroll the grounds, and applauded the tournament for opening the door to new media.

“Creator coverage is really important and as the years go on, it’s going to be even more important,” he said.

“It’s really cool to see USTA be the first to do this type of coverage and I think other festivals, events and sporting leagues, they’re going to catch on.”

Alex Rogers, OOTD’s other co-creator, said they are seeing spikes in engagement and views, as well as an increase in feedback from fans during the tournament. “We have people in our comments who are like, ‘How did you miss my outfit today?’” he said.

“We definitely love seeing that and we try to capture everybody.”

In terms of the USTA’s goals, Zipper said the focus is on overall engagement across its channels rather than follower growth alone. The U.S. Open generated a record 2.3 billion engagements through its platforms over last year’s three-week period, he said.

(Reuters)

Orbit coach slams Saleng, questions his impact at the club

ORBIT College FC coach Pogiso Makhoye has questioned Monnapule Saleng's impact at the club.

Saleng rejoined Orbit on a season-long loan from Orlando Pirates in July this year. He was meant to rejuvenate his career after his troubles at Pirates, where he had been sidelined since December of last year due to contractual disputes.

When he joined the Mswenko Boys, Makhoye was delighted to reunite with the winger, but after just a few games into the new Betway Premiership season, the coach seems to have changed his tune about the Bafana winger. Saleng is 'struggling'

Speaking to Andile Ncube on Metro FM this week, Makhoye said some of the club's youngsters are performing better than Saleng.

"So far, I think he's not given us what we expected from him as a big player. A player that comes in as a big name, so those are the things that you need to sit down and check as a team. To say, 'is it really affecting the team, are we playing better



▲ Orbit College FC' Monnapule Saleng's impact at the club is questioned.

when he's in the team or when he's not in the team," said Makhoye.

Saleng has played four of Orbit's opening five league matches since their promotion to the Betway Premiership. He missed the game against Pirates due to the two clubs' loan agreement.

"Well, out of the four games that he has played, I think he's not the Saleng that we used to see at Pirates. He's still struggling. He hasn't given us much, especially in the four

games that he has played, as he has no assists and no goals," said Makhoye.

"Even when we played against Pirates, and he was not part of the team, I felt the youngsters did very well without him. However, we will help him adjust to the team, and we are patient with him. But as much as we are patient with him, we need to put the team first. We will work with him and see how we can improve the team." (The Citizen)

Shalulile breaks silence on future after record-breaking feat

FRESH from breaking Siyabonga Nomvethe's long-standing PSL goalscoring record, Mamelodi Sundowns striker Peter Shalulile has finally addressed the rumours that clouded his future before the start of the season.

The Namibian forward was widely believed to be on the verge of joining Tunisian club Espérance, but the deal failed to materialise. As a result, he returned to Sundowns after missing the season-opening MTN8 clash against Richards Bay. Shalulile appears to have put the uncertainty behind him, after being reintegrated into the Sundowns squad. Before departing to join the Brave Warriors for the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Malawi and São Tomé and Príncipe, he explained what transpired during the pre-season.

"For now, I won't lie to you guys. I'm back (because) things didn't go well. They were discussing and negotiating about paperwork and all that, but I decided to call the chairman and told him that let me rather come back to add my experience and fight for my position," he said. Shalulile also revealed the



▲ Mamelodi Sundowns striker Peter Shalulile.

secret behind his remarkable consistency, which has seen him score goals with relative ease. His 130th strike in Sundowns' narrow 1-0 victory over Stellenbosch FC, saw him become the league's all-time leading scorer. He attributes his success to tireless work on the training ground at Chloorkop.

"Yes, I believe that you can't score goals if you don't do extras, break records if you're not putting in the work or dream of something but you don't work at it," he added. "For me, on my off days, I make sure that I come in and do my best to just fix things and what I know are weaknesses in me that I want to turn into positives. I want to make sure that when I get opportunities in such situations, I bang them in." (Sunday World)

All Blacks acknowledge special rivalry with Boks before Eden Park epic

THE All Blacks have paid homage to the special rivalry they have with the Springboks, and acknowledge the challenge that awaits them in their Test match at Eden Park on Saturday.

The teams clash at the Auckland venue in the first of two Rugby Championship matches. The All Blacks have not lost there in 31 years.

While coach Scott Robertson said even the fear of losing provided motivation to defend their fortress, he and loose forward Wallace Sititi also acknowledged the magnitude of a match between the world's two top teams – both of whom are currently a little short of form.

The second match will be played in Wellington the following week.

Rivalry comes to a head
The Springboks are the reigning Rugby Championship title holders and have won the last four Tests against the All Blacks over the past two years. However, looking back at their century-old rivalry, the Boks have only won 10 matches in New Zealand, while losing 32, and drawing three. Their most recent win in New Zealand came in 2018, when they triumphed 36-34 in Wellington, and since then they have only played twice more in the country, drawing 16-all in Wellington in 2019 and losing 35-20 in Auckland in 2023.

But the rugby rivalry between the two nations stretches back to their first series in 1921 (three



▲ All Blacks loose forward Wallace Sititi says the Springboks are world champions for a reason.

games: one win each and a draw). It has come to be one of the greatest match-ups in world sport, and is seen as the pinnacle of rugby.

From the All Blacks' first win in SA in 1956 to the 1995 Rugby World Cup final, and the same showpiece in France in 2023, the competi-

tion between the nations has only heated up, now coming to a head in what Robertson called the most important match of his coaching tenure.

Sititi described the rivalry between the nations as special and said the Springboks are defending World Champions for a reason.

"Growing up you watch the All Blacks and Springboks play," he said. "I watched Manu Samoa and my father [Semo Sititi] play the Springboks as well. It's always a special occasion to go up against a quality side like the Springboks. It's always a pleasure and a challenge.

"Us as players, we talk about these big moments. It's what we've worked for, what we dream of." (The Citizen)

Bafana will now host Lesotho, Nigeria in Free State Stadium

AFTER a back-and-forth between FIFA pitch inspectors and CAF officials, the highly anticipated 2026 FIFA World Cup Bafana Bafana qualifiers against Lesotho and Nigeria will now go ahead at the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein as originally planned, following a recent physical inspection of the pitch.

Bafana coach relieved
Earlier this week, Bafana coach Hugo Broos was a little disappointed after Sifa was informed that the bigger Free State Stadium was no longer available due to a pitch that

was deemed not good enough to host crucial World Cup qualifiers by Fifa.

But the news that the stadium has been given the green light will have felt like music to Broos' ears.

In a tough two-match schedule in this FIFA calendar week, South Africa will recommence their World Cup qualifiers against Lesotho on Friday, also at the Free State Stadium. No longer at the smaller Dr Petrus Molemela Stadium in Rocklands, just outside Bloemfontein. The City of Roses has been a slaughterhouse for Bafana, as witnessed in the previous match against Zimbabwe. Bloemfontein gives you the

most passionate supporters. They easily become the 12th player on match days.

The Nigeria fixture, set for Tuesday, September 9, with a 6pm kick-off, had been under scrutiny in recent weeks. This was amid concerns over the readiness of the playing surface following the harsh winter season. Pitch progress deciding factor

In a joint communication to Sifa CEO Lydia Monyepao, both FIFA and CAF confirmed the venue's approval. They cited "encouraging progress observed on the pitch" as the deciding factor.

"Considering the encouraging progress observed on the pitch, both organisations

have agreed that the matches will proceed as originally scheduled at the Free State Stadium," reads the statement from FIFA and CAF.

Bafana Bafana are currently in camp in Johannesburg, fine-tuning preparations for a critical pair of qualifiers. First up is a clash against Lesotho on Friday, September 5. This is before they turn their attention to the Super Eagles of Nigeria next Tuesday. With the green light now granted, attention shifts firmly to the pitch. Both in terms of its condition and the players who must perform on it.

WORLD CUP 2026 QUALIFIER PREVIEW



Sihlangu in ‘Indomitable Lions’ den

Stories by Chris Dlamini

Date: Thursday, September 4
Venue: Ahmadou Ahidjo Stadium, Yaounde, Cameroon
Kick-off: 9pm

NICKNAMED ‘The Indomitable Lions’, the Cameroon national team will on Thursday host Eswatini’s national side, Sihlangu Semnikati in Capital, Yaounde.

The match is at 4pm local time. This face-off is part of Group D’s 2026 World Cup qualification matches. The Indomitable Lions will aim to be as ruthless as they can be to Eswatini following the world-shocking goalless draw in Mbombela, Nelspruit, South Africa (SA) in the first leg of the qualifiers early this year.

They had brought their A-squad but not their A-game to SA and Eswatini nearly defeated them even. Cameroon currently sits second in the group with 12 points, having secured three wins and three draws. They remain unbeaten with 12 goals scored and four conceded. Sihlangu, meanwhile, is at the bottom of the table with two points from two draws and four defeats. The Swati team has scored four goals and conceded nine. It is now about formality and pride for Eswati-



▲ Sihlangu head coach Zdravko Logarusic issuing during their 3all draw against Mauritius.

ni as qualifying has failed.

It is Cameroon who are under massive pressure to win this match or risk missing out as there will still be two fixtures remaining for them and their rivals, leaders Cape Verde (12 points) and third-placed Libya who have eight points. Cameroon needs to win this match to keep their hopes of a

straight qualification as number one in the group alive. Only the top team in each of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) groups gets straight qualification.

The home team has played Eswatini three times in world qualifiers and has never lost but won one, and drew two. A win is a must this time against the Croatian coach Zdravko



▲ Justice Figueiredo fighting for the ball against a Mauritius player.

Logarusic-led Sihlangu.

Meanwhile, the match will be broadcast on CRTV Sports & Entertainment, as well as on Canal+ and Bein Sport across their various channels.

HEAD-TO-HEAD 2026 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS:

March 19, 2025

Eswatini 0-0 Cameroon

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

Brian Mbeumo (Cameroon and Manchester United in England)

Justice Figueiredo (Eswatini and Chippa United in South Africa)

Mvutjini Super 8 KO teams register

THE stage is set for the Mvutjini Pool Room Super 8 Teams Knockout Tournament.

Sponsored to the tune of E5,500 for specifically invited teams, the Super 8’s rules required each participating team to pay a registration fee of E500.

“It’s going down on Independence Day at Mvutjini Pool Room. Our teams have already registered and we’re looking forward to yet another exciting Pool action,” said one of tournament coordinators Sithembiso ‘Dodge’ Matsebula.

He thanked Mvutjini Pool Room for this Independence Day tournament to ensure they had an enjoyable weekend, doing what

they love best, which is playing pool.

The teams are Martins, Billiards, Magesi, Seven Secrets, Game Den, Mbabane Pool Club, Mvutjini and Bel-Air. The best of them will take home E2 000. Action starts at 10am on Saturday.

The runners-up stand to take home E1 500 and silver medals while it will be E1 000 apiece for the semi-finalists.

For further details, Matsebula and Msandi at 7608 0305 and 7651 5301.

Prizes List:

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



▲ Pool players during a local competition.

Netball men side to host Zimbabwe

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE Eswatini National Netball Association (ENNA) has intensified preparations for the 2025 Africa Netball Cup.

The member body has lined up an international friendly match for the mens national team scheduled between September 5-7, 2025, at Mavuso Sports Centre.

The two days series is in preparations for the annual continental scheduled for Malawi in December.

The Themba Sifundza-led side reached the finals of the previous annual continental cup held in Namibia.

ENNA Secretary Nkabindze Shabalala confirmed the latest news when reached for comment.

“We are pleased to announce that the Zimbabwe Males Netball National Team will be visiting Eswatini to participate in a three-day test series against the Eswatini National Team. The matches are scheduled to take place from 5 - 7 September 2025,” he said.

He further revealed that the national team will be announced on September 4, 2025.

“The Eswatini National Team players and technical team will be officially announced by Thursday (September 4, 2025) following careful selection based on performances during the Trade Fair games. We look forward to an exciting and competitive series as both teams showcase their skills and sportsmanship,” he said.



▲ The mens netball national team.

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE bilateral relations between Eswatini and Mozambique have extended to sports.

The two nations will feature in two days international friendly two scheduled for Malkerns club between September 12-14, 2025.

The Eswatini cricket Association announced the latest on their social media page.

“The Eswatini Cricket Association is delighted to announce that we will be hosting our neighbours, Mozambique, for an exciting Men’s T20 International Bilateral Series. This marks another proud milestone as we continue to showcase Eswatini cricket on the global stage,” the association

The local cricket body further stated that the two matches will strengthen the development of the sport in the region.

“This series is officially recognized as an ICC Men’s T20I Series, giving players the opportunity to compete for international rankings and points. It also strengthens regional cricket ties as both nations continue to grow and make their mark in African cricket. The national team will be announced in the next few days, featuring the best local talent,” the association said.

International cricket returns to Eswatini



▲ The cricket national team.



▲EOCGA CEO Maxwell Jele.

EOCGA CEO off to Switzerland

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE CEO of Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association, Maxwell Jele, has left the country for Switzerland, where he is going to complete his Master’s in Executive Sports Management programme (MEMOS).

Jele is expected to touch down in Geneva and proceed to the IOC Headquarters in Lausanne, where he is scheduled to make two

presentations on his dissertation/project.

MEMOS is a special programme delivered by the University of Ottawa-Canada and is a specially tailored master’s Programme for Sports professionals. In the current cohort, Jele is one of 35 professionals from all over the world engaging in the programme.

This was confirmed by a statement released by the local Olympic movement.

“As EOCGA, we wish the CEO the best of luck as he defends his dissertation, which is instrumental in shaping the sporting movement in the country,” the organisation said.

Jele is also Secretary for the ANOCA Zone VI wing.

8 BET TRADE FAIR 2025:

It's Sea Birds vs Nsingizini in semis

By Chris Dlamini

M. Pirates.....① 1,
Senalelo 37th
M. Sea Birds.....② 2,
Mthokozisi 43rd, Linda 67th

WHAT a game!

The hub derby between last year's runners-up Moneni Pirates and their city neighbours Manzini Sea Birds was an edge-of-the-seat encounter besides the anti-football drama by both sides. Pirates lost the contest 2-1 amid scoring first through troublesome forward Senanelo Nkambule seven minutes from the half-hour mark. He scored a stunning goal from outside the box that went over the hapless goalkeeper Lindani Mtsetfwa into the top corner. His goal was soon cancelled out by Mthokozisi Gwebu two minutes from the break. He beat an advancing Qiniso Nyawo after a stellar through ball.

The teams went to the breather tied at 1-1 in what an evenly contested opening half was. Sea Birds came back strongest in the second half and deservedly took the lead in the 67th. It was yet another beautiful goal volleyed from a costly intended back header to his goalkeeper by captain Menzi 'Magawugawu' Simelane. Sea Birds will now meet Nsingizini Hotspurs in the semi-finals on Saturday at the Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini. Nsingizini eliminated a tough Malanti Chiefs on penalties after a goalless 90 minutes. Meanwhile, Ubombo Sugar FC will take on Green Mamba in the other semi-final clash - E630 000 is at stake in the finals on Sunday. Otherwise, Moneni finished strongly in search of an equaliser, but it never came.



▲ Manzini Seabirds celebrate after defeating Moneni Pirates 2 -1 in the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup at Mavuso Sports Ground.

'D4D', 'Gusheshe' take Green Mamba to semis

By Chris Dlamini

R. Leopard.....1
G. Mamba.....2

POLICE outfit Royal Leopard are out of the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025/26 after losing 2-0 to security forces derby rivals Green Mamba.

A late penalty miss by second half substitute forward Mike Mohammed Anas seemed to be the sign of bad times for Ingwe Mabalabala. Mohammed missed the target after a dramatic take with signs of the supernatural taking centre stage. Players clashed in suspicion Green Mamba had got something from their bench to plant around his goal.

When Mohammed finally took the spot, he missed by inches as he shot wide, failing to beat a man of the match performing Xolani Gama. He ensured his team won with his brilliant second half saves to deny Felix Badenhorst, Thokozani 'Thikithi' Dlamini and Mancoba Maseko.

Setting up a semi-finals clash with Ubombo Sugar FC for Inyoka Eluhlazana was former Mbabane Swallows duo of Njabulo 'D4D' Ndlovu and Siyabonga 'Gusheshe' Zwane. Ndlovu was on target in the second minute



▲ Green Mamba players Njabulo Ndlovu, Siyabonga Zwane and Banele Shongwe celebrating their 2-1 win against Royal Leopards in the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup.

before Zwane sealed it on stoppage time. Mohammed scored their consolation goal in the last minute of stoppage time but his penalty miss may have been the right tonic had he scored.

Dominated

Otherwise, it was a game of two halves as Leopard took the game to their rivals in the second stanza. Inyoka had dominated the opening half, which saw Leopard head coach Edwin Matsebula quickly introduce Fanelo Tsabedze for Wandile Lukhele to add

more creativity in midfield for the forward line. The change had little impact as the Correctional Services side still looked more dangerous on the counter and got the better of the few chances. It was basically half-chances for both sides.

Meanwhile, Leopard had eliminated elite debutants Amawele to reach the quarter-finals. They won 3-1 on Monday.

Green Mamba, on the other hand, outfoxed hub giants Manzini Wanderers on Sunday with a 2-0 margin in the last 16.



▲ Local gold medalist Chadd Ning with his international compatriots Nathan Nagapin and Khalil Sethi in the ongoing Africa Aquatics zone iv championships.

Chadd dives into gold

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI has made a perfect start into the 2025 Africa Aquatics Zone IV championships.

This follows the victory of male youngster Chadd Ning in the 50m breaststroke on Wednesday at Enjabulweni Independent School.

He swam 30.99 seconds to clinch a gold medal ahead of Nathan Nagapin from Seychelles and Khalid Sethi from Botswana.

Ning recently represented the country in the 2025 World Aquatics with Australia-based female Siwakhile Dlamini.

Other members of the national team include internationals 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 Wilsoh
- 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



Orbit coach slams Saleng, questions his impact at the club

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Chadd dives into gold

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Sport



SBET TRADE FAIR CUP 2025 :

It's Sea Birds vs Nsingizini in semis

... Manzini Sea Birds shock hot favourites Moneni Pirates 2-1 in a dramatic quarter-final clash on Wednesday to set up a semi-final encounter with Nsingizini Hotspurs. *Page 23*