



King praised for improvements in Umhlanga ceremony

By Bongekile Ngcamphalala, Sebulelo Magagula and Sebenele Ndlovu

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Palazzo Hospitality moves closer to managing ICC&FISH

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King praised for improvements to Umhlanga Ceremony

By Bongekile Ngcamphalala, Sebulelo Magagula and Sebenele Ndlovu

NEWLY-APPOINTED Indvuna Yembali (leader of the maidens), Bongiwe Vivane Hlatjwako, has expressed gratitude to His Majesty King Mswati III for significant improvements to the annual Umhlanga Reed Dance ceremony.

Speaking after the traditional reed cutting ceremony yesterday, Hlatjwako highlighted major enhancements to services, including better food, amenities, and accommodations, which have led to a notable increase in the number of participants.

Hlatjwako specifically mentioned the provision of hot showers, a welcome change from previous years when maidens had to bathe in cold rivers. This improvement, along with enhanced food services, has greatly improved the experience for the young women. “We now

receive plenty of meals to sustain us throughout the day’s activities,” Hlatjwako stated, adding that the quality and quantity of food have seen a marked improvement

since she first attended the event in 2008. The Deputy Prime Minister’s office also provided toiletries, including sanitary pads, deodorant, body spray, and body lotion, further ensuring the comfort and well-being of the maidens. These material benefits, along with better accommodation, have attracted more participants to the ceremony, as many see the event as both a cultural duty and a rewarding experience.

One maiden by the name of Tembutfo enthusiastically shared her appreciation for the new hot water facilities. “I am enjoying myself here at Umhlanga since I am able to use hot water in the morning, which is usually cold,” she said, highlighting a simple yet impactful change.

Furthermore, Imbali explained that they are happy they will be led by a fresh mind in Bongiwe Hlatjwako, who they believe will bring new ideas that will further bring more changes to the service being offered to the Annual Umhlanga Ceremony and in the long run, they would also like to be appointed to be Indvuna Yembali too, so they would bring their experiences too. The improvements show the monarchy’s commitment to ensuring the safety, health, and comfort of the young women who participate in this important cultural tradition.



▲ Princess Sakhizwe, Liphovela LaZuma and other members of the Royal family ready to leave Mpisa Farm after cutting the reed.

Palazzo Hospitality moves closer to managing ICC&FISH

By Kwanele Dhladhla

ESWATINI is poised for a transformative leap in its global tourism stature as Palazzo Hospitality steps in to manage the nearly completed Multibillion International Convention Centre and Five-Star Hotel (ICC&FISH).

With expectations of bolstering the Kingdom’s visitor growth and cementing its reputation as a top conference destination, this partnership promises to elevate Eswatini’s profile on the international stage.

Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Jane Mkhonta-Simelane, has confirmed that Palazzo Hospitality is in Eswatini to operationalise the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and ensure all preparations are in place for the internationally acclaimed company to commence management by March, 2026.

The world-class facility, whose construction is being finalised by Inyatsi Construction, is set to be a game-changer for the Kingdom’s tourism and hospitality sector, boosting Eswatini’s standing as a premier conference and leisure destination in Southern Africa. Expected to attract over 50,000 visitors annually, with an average stay of three nights and an anticipated increase in average spending by 20%, the facility promises to significantly enhance the economic impact on the region.

Speaking on the sidelines of the company’s working visit at the Hilton Garden Inn, Minister Mkhonta-Simelane highlighted that the MOU signed with Palazzo Hospitality last year is now moving into its implementation phase.

“The country will recall that we have identified Palazzo Hospitality as the operator for both the convention centre and the hotel. We signed an MOU with them, and now we are organising and preparing for them to be



▲ Ministers of Tourism and Environmental Affairs Jane Mkhonta-Simelane and Finance Neal Rijkenberg pose for a group picture with senior management of internationally acclaimed Palazzo Hospitality.

in place. This involves a lot of logistical and technical work to ensure that everything meets the standards required for a five-star international facility,” she explained.

The Minister emphasised that the visit by Palazzo Hospitality representatives includes inspecting infrastructure, reviewing equipment needs, and engaging with key stakeholders across government to ensure readiness.

“Some of the preparations involve them coming into the country to ensure the availability of specific equipment and infrastructure. They are also here to engage with various stakeholders to coordinate efforts in strategic areas. This includes ministries grouped under investment facilitation, such as Commerce, Industry and Trade, and Economic Planning and Development, as well as ministries under infrastructure readiness and compliance, including Finance, Home Affairs,

and Works and Public Transport. These engagements are crucial to address issues such as ease of access to the country, registration processes, taxation, and compliance with standards,” she said.

Mkhonta-Simelane noted that standards relating to communication, transport, and ICT are central to Palazzo Hospitality’s preparations. “They need to be assured that Eswatini has the systems in place to meet the expectations of international guests and business travellers,” Mkhonta-Simelane said.

The minister reaffirmed the government’s commitment to ensuring that Palazzo Hospitality is ready to operate the hotel by the end of December 2025. She outlined a phased readiness roadmap that includes key milestones to build confidence among potential investors and partners. The roadmap consists of three clear phases: initial staffing and

recruitment, systems testing throughout the facility, and conducting soft-opening trials to fine-tune operations. “Come December, we want to be ready. Not necessarily to start operations immediately, but to ensure that everything is in place so that Palazzo Hospitality can hit the ground running from then on. December is our milestone for readiness,” she emphasised. While specifics around job creation and economic opportunities will be announced once Palazzo Hospitality completes its internal assessments, preliminary estimates suggest that the project could create between 500 and 700 direct jobs in the hospitality sector. In addition, an estimated 300 to 500 indirect roles could be generated in related industries such as tourism, transportation, and retail. The Minister stressed that these figures are subject to refinement, but they signal the significant opportunities expected in hospitality, tourism, and related industries. “Palazzo Hospitality is still reviewing the structures, analysing operational requirements, and will also be engaging with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Once they finalise their plans, they will speak to the numbers in terms of probable job opportunities and other openings linked to the hotel and convention centre,” she added.

The ICC&FISH is expected to transform Eswatini into a competitive player in the global meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) market, while also elevating the hospitality experience for international and local guests.

Minister Mkhonta-Simelane concluded by noting that the partnership with Palazzo Hospitality marks a major step forward for the country:

“What this means is that the MOU is no longer just on paper-it is now being implemented. With Palazzo Hospitality in place, we are preparing Eswatini to showcase to the world that we are ready to host international events at the highest standard,” she concluded.

Eswatini moves to phase out highly hazardous pesticide

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Government of Eswatini has declared war on the rampant misuse of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs), with the Ministry of Agriculture announcing bold steps to curb the alarming rise in pesticide related deaths.

Speaking at the Stakeholder Engagement Meeting on the Management of HHPs, held on Thursday at The New George Hotel in Manzini, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Mandla Tshawuka, said the irresponsible handling and abuse of pesticides particularly Methomyl, commonly sold as Master 900 has escalated into a national crisis.

“Across Eswatini, pesticide poisoning is claiming lives at an alarming rate. These tragedies are not just statistics, but the lives of our brothers, sisters, parents, and children. Each life lost is a family devastated and a community broken,” said the Minister.

The Minister noted that Master 900, originally intended as a crop protection chemical, has been widely misused as a poison, leading to shocking incidents of mass killings, including entire households. “As a nation, we cannot allow tools meant to protect our crops to be used as weapons of mass destruction,” Tshawuka warned.

He commended agro-dealers who have already removed Master 900 from their shelves, calling them “responsible corporate citizens” who have set a precedent for the rest of the industry.

The Minister closed his remarks with an

... Master 900 will be banned soon - Minister of Agriculture



▲ Agro dealers, Ministry of Health Officers and staff of the Ministry of Agriculture took a group picture after the symposium.

appeal for constructive engagement:

“Let us commit to building an agricultural system where no farmer, no worker, and no member of the public loses life through misuse or abuse of pesticides.”

He also extended gratitude to international partners supporting the Eswatini Pesticide Poisoning Project, which made the consultative dialogue possible.

It should be noted that as Eswatini grapples with balancing agricultural productivity and public safety, yesterday’s meeting signalled the government’s determination to act decisively. The phase-out of Highly

Hazardous Pesticides may mark a turning point towards a safer, more sustainable farming future for the Kingdom.

A coordinated national response

The meeting, attended by development partners, regulatory agencies, farmers, agro-dealers, civil society, and academia, sought to foster dialogue and cooperation on pesticide regulation. Tshawuka outlined a four-point agenda:

- ▶ Align national obligations with global best practices.

- ▶ Assess the social, health, and economic toll of pesticide poisoning.
- ▶ Develop a National Pesticide List to ensure registered products meet strict safety and efficacy standards.
- ▶ Build consensus for the gradual phase-out of HHPs, starting with Master 900.

The Minister emphasized that the solution will not be imposed by government alone but will emerge from “an inclusive, participatory process” involving all stakeholders.

Planned interventions

To facilitate the transition, the Ministry of Agriculture will:

- ▶ Train and certify agro-dealers to guide farmers towards safer alternatives.
- ▶ Accelerate research and registration of affordable, less harmful products.
- ▶ Strengthen enforcement to ensure HHPs are withdrawn permanently from circulation.

“This is not just a technical problem it is a social, economic, and moral issue that touches every sector of society,” the Minister stressed.

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

In a direct call to action, Tshawuka challenged:

- ▶ Regulators to enforce standards with integrity.
- ▶ Farmers to adopt safer practices and share knowledge.
- ▶ Researchers to provide data for sound decisions.
- ▶ The private sector to innovate safer solutions.
- ▶ Agro-dealers to stop stocking dangerous chemicals.
- ▶ Civil society to raise awareness and hold players accountable.
- ▶ Health practitioners and environmentalists to monitor impacts and support communities.

TRADITIONAL LEADERS CONFERENCE: Over 50 African traditional leaders arrive

By Thokozani Mazibuko

MORE than 50 Kings, Chiefs, and Queens from across the African continent have begun arriving in Eswatini to attend the Traditional Leaders Conference, hosted by the Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development.

The high-profile gathering is scheduled to take place at Esibayeni Lodge from Friday, September 4, to Tuesday, September 9. According to the Ministry’s Communications Officer, Nosimilo Dlamini, the conference will provide a platform for traditional leaders to share experiences, strengthen cultural ties, and deliberate on how traditional institutions can contribute to Africa’s social and economic development in the modern era. The gathering is expected to draw distinguished traditional authorities from Southern, Eastern, and West Africa, creating a unique platform for dialogue on issues of governance, cultural preservation, and community leadership. “Traditional leaders remain a cornerstone of identity, unity, and continuity in Africa,” said Dlamini. “This conference will not only promote cultural exchange but also reinforce collaboration between traditional institutions and governments in pursuit of sustainable development.”

Link to Umhlanga Reed Dance

In addition to the formal conference



▲ Minister of Tinkhundla and Administration Sikhumbuzo Dlamini delivering his speech at the event.

sessions, the visiting monarchs and chiefs will also be guests of His Majesty King Mswati III at the ongoing Umhlanga Reed Dance Ceremony at the Eludzidzini Royal Residence.

The Umhlanga, one of Eswatini’s most important cultural festivals, attracts thousands of maidens from across the country each year and is a showcase of national pride, unity, and tradition. The presence of African royals is expected to lend further prestige to the event while strengthening intercontinental cultural solidarity.

Esibayeni Lodge, located in Matsapha, has been prepared to host the delegations in a

secure and culturally befitting environment. The venue will serve not only as a conference ground but also as a meeting place for cultural exchange and networking among the leaders.

Security has been tightened around the lodge and nearby areas, with both local law enforcement and royal security units ensuring smooth facilitation of the week-long conference.

Anticipated outcomes

Key topics expected to dominate the conference include:

- ▶ The role of traditional leaders in conflict

resolution and peacebuilding.

- ▶ Preservation of indigenous knowledge systems and heritage.
- ▶ The balance between modern governance and traditional authority.
- ▶ Youth empowerment and cultural education.

The Ministry of Tinkhundla and Development has indicated that resolutions from the gathering will contribute to ongoing continental conversations on how Africa’s cultural institutions can complement state governance in addressing challenges such as social cohesion, climate change, and sustainable livelihoods.

A celebration of culture and leadership

The arrival of the African dignitaries has already sparked excitement among locals, with many describing it as a “rare cultural homecoming.” “This is a proud moment for Eswatini,” said a community elder in Matsapha. “Hosting so many Kings, Queens, and Chiefs shows that our traditions remain respected across the continent. It is also a chance for our young people to witness the strength of African unity through culture.”

It should be noted that as the conference kicks off tomorrow, all eyes will be on Eswatini as it becomes the centre of African traditional leadership - celebrating heritage, unity, and the vision of cultural institutions in the continent’s development journey.

Crowds flock to Eswatini International Trade Fair

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Eswatini International Trade Fair (EITF) is drawing unprecedented numbers this year, with attendance swelling daily since the exhibition opened last Friday at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre.

On Thursday morning, throngs of EmaSwati began streaming into the venue as early as 7 a.m., eager to experience the displays, innovations, and entertainment that the fair has become known for. By mid-morning, the exhibition grounds were a hive of activity, with families, school groups, and business representatives filling the pavilions and outdoor stalls.

A 10-day showcase of innovation and trade

The EITF, which runs for 10 days, is the Kingdom's largest trade and investment showcase. It brings together local entrepreneurs, government agencies, regional exhibitors, and international companies eager to connect with Eswatini's growing market.

This year's edition features a mix of traditional handicrafts, modern technology, agricultural products, textiles, food processing, and machinery, reflecting both the diversity of the local economy and opportunities for international partnerships.

Royal tour expected



▲ People cascaded to the Mavuso Trade Centre in droves.

The highlight of the Fair is expected this Saturday, September 6, when His Majesty King Mswati III is scheduled to tour the pavilions. The royal visit is traditionally one of the most anticipated moments of the exhibition, as it underscores the importance of the fair in promoting national development, innovation, and trade competitiveness.

Organizers say preparations are already in full swing to receive the King and other dignitaries. Exhibitors are polishing up their stalls to ensure they showcase the very best of what they have to offer.

A platform for business and culture

Beyond trade and investment, the EITF has become a cultural and social event. Live performances, local cuisine, and family-friendly entertainment are pulling in not only business leaders but also everyday citi-

zens looking to celebrate Eswatini's creativity and resilience.

Several business forums and seminars are also scheduled during the week, providing opportunities for knowledge exchange on key issues such as industrialization, youth entrepreneurship, and digital transformation.

Public excitement grows

SADC deploys electoral observation mission to Malawi's 2025 general election

THE Southern African Development Community (SADC) has officially deployed its Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Malawi ahead of the country's highly anticipated General Election, scheduled for 16 September 2025.

The Mission is being led by the Right Honourable Themba Nhlanganiso Masuku, former Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini. His appointment was announced by His Majesty King Mswati III, the Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

According to SADC, the deployment follows the provisions of Article 3 of the revised Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021), which obliges the regional bloc to observe all general elections held within its 16 Member States.

The Government of Malawi formally extended an invitation to SADC on 9 December 2024, requesting the Mission's presence during the polls that will elect the country's President, Members of Parliament, and Local Government representatives.

Mission deployment and scope

The SADC Secretariat confirmed that its support team arrived in Lilongwe on 1 September 2025 to oversee logistical preparations. The SEOM will be stationed across all of Malawi's 28 districts, ensuring nationwide coverage of the electoral process.

Observers will monitor the pre-election environment, polling day, and post-election activities, assessing whether the elections are conducted in a manner that is free, fair, transparent, credible, and peaceful, in accordance with regional democratic standards.

The Mission will also engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), government institutions, political parties, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), women and youth groups, and the diplomatic community. These consultations are ex-

pected to provide insights into Malawi's political and security landscape, electoral preparedness, and the broader constitutional and legal framework underpinning the 2025 polls.

Speaking to this publication, a first-time attendee expressed excitement at the atmosphere. "I came early because I didn't want to miss anything. There's so much to see from new farming technologies to local fashion. It makes me proud to see how much Eswatini is capable of producing," she said.

Vendors too are optimistic, with many reporting brisk sales since the opening day. "The traffic has been amazing this year," said one local agro-processor. "It shows that people are really interested in supporting local businesses."

With several more days to go before the fair concludes, organizers expect the numbers to grow even further, especially over the weekend when families and schoolchildren traditionally make their way to the grounds.

It should be noted that the Eswatini International Trade Fair continues to position itself as not only a marketplace but also a national celebration of innovation, resilience, and opportunity bringing together government, business, and the public under one roof.



▲ Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. Themba Masuku.

pected to provide insights into Malawi's political and security landscape, electoral preparedness, and the broader constitutional and legal framework underpinning the 2025 polls.

Upholding democracy in the region

The SEOM's presence shows SADC's commitment to strengthening democracy and governance across Southern Africa. By ensuring that elections meet the bloc's agreed standards, the Mission aims to safeguard stability and foster trust in democratic institutions.



The Head of Mission, Themba Masuku, is expected to issue preliminary findings shortly after polling day, followed by a comprehensive report on the conduct of the elections.


About SADC

Founded in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) and transformed into the Southern African Development Community in August 1992, SADC currently comprises 16 Member States: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The organisation's mission is to promote sustainable economic growth, socio-economic development, deeper regional integration, and durable peace and security, ensuring that Southern Africa becomes a competitive and effective player in global affairs.

It should be noted that as Malawi prepares to head to the polls, all eyes will be on the SEOM's assessment and the extent to which it will reinforce confidence in the nation's democratic journey.





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By Thokozani Mazibuko

Elderly woman killed in road accident near Fairview

TRAGEDY struck on the evening of Wednesday, September 3, 2025, when a 63-year-old woman from Makholweni lost her life after being struck by a motor vehicle along the Northern Distributor public road near Fairview.

According to a statement issued by the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, the incident occurred at around 8:30 p.m. A 40-year-old man from Fairview was behind the wheel of an Audi sedan when the vehicle knocked down the elderly pedestrian.

“The pedestrian sustained serious injuries and was rushed to the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial (RFM) Hospital, where she was unfortunately certified dead upon arrival,” Mnguni confirmed.

The Audi sedan was reportedly extensively damaged on its front portion because of the impact. Authorities have not yet confirmed whether the driver was speeding or if any other traffic violations were involved in the fatal crash.

Police investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances that led to the accident. Meanwhile, the Royal Eswatini Police Service has appealed to both motorists



and pedestrians to exercise extreme caution when using the roads, particularly at night.

“This unfortunate incident is a painful reminder of the need for road users to be vigilant. Drivers are urged to maintain safe

speeds and always watch out for pedestrians, while pedestrians should use designated crossing points where possible,” Mnguni added.

This case marks one of the latest fatalities



▲ Deputy PICO Nosipho Mnguni.

recorded on Eswatini’s roads, underscoring persistent road safety concerns. Authorities continue to encourage members of the public to adhere to traffic regulations to save lives.

The name of the deceased has not yet been released, as police await official communication with her family.

ELAMA/ICMA signs MoU

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE Eswatini Local Authorities Managers Association (ELAMA) has taken a bold step to transform local municipalities.

The local body has signed a memorandum of understanding with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). This was during the dinner of the ongoing international seminar held on Wednesday at Royal Villas.

The MoU will see the exchange of programmes between the two bodies following the hosting of the international seminar in the country for the first time in history.

ELAMA President and Manzini City Council Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Lungile Dlamini stated that the country is pleased to host the seminar.

“This is history for Eswatini to host such a big event, and we are grateful for the opportunity. We are confident that the MoU with improve local municipalities,” he said.

ICMA president Mark Land said they are

happy to partner with the local body.

“It’s such an honour to partner with Eswatini and we will continue supporting their programs. We call upon each municipal council to work hard with their various workstations,” he said.

Minister of Housing and Urban Development Apollo Maphalala welcomed the hosting of the seminar in the country.

“It is a delight to welcome the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) delegation to the Kingdom of Eswatini for the 2025 ICMA Global Exchange Programme. We note with pride that this is the ICMA’s first visit to our continent,” he said. The minister said the program will play a key role in developing local municipalities.

“This programme is a beacon of collaboration. Its central mission is to create and sustain thriving communities by advancing local government. Best practices resonate profoundly with our national aspirations. It is an objective that speaks directly to our mandate under the Urban Local Government Act of 1969: to ensure that our municipalities remain responsive, innovative, and effective in meeting the needs of our citizens,” the minister said. Maphalala further



▲ ELAMA president Lungile Dlamini and ICMA president Mike Land during the signing of the MOU on Wednesday at Royal Villas.

applauded local municipalities for embracing international trends in a bid to improve their respective entities.

“We are glad that through the Eswatini Local Authorities Managers Association (ELAMA), our municipalities have embraced continuous learning and capacity-building as a cornerstone of their strategy. This aligns seamlessly with the ICMA’s commitment to professional development, knowledge sharing, and the dissemination of globally researched data and insights. Together, these efforts will undoubtedly strengthen

the foundations of urban governance in Eswatini,” he said.

He also thanked ICMA for allowing Eswatini to host the seminar and pledged continued support towards the development of municipalities. “As a Ministry, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting initiatives such as this, which are vital in strengthening service delivery and enhancing the quality of life in our urban spaces,” Maphalala said.

The dinner was attended by various local and international guests, including senate president Lindiwe Dlamini.



▲ ELAMA president Lungile Dlamini delivering remarks.



▲ Minister of Housing and Urban Development Apollo Maphalala making his remarks.



▲ Senate president Lindiwe Dlamini was among the guests.



▲ Some of the international guests during the dinner.

Man assaults mother over Indumba

Stories by Delisa Magagula

A 21-year-old man, who is both a pupil and a practitioner of traditional healing, appeared in the Nhlangano Magistrate's Court this week after allegedly assaulting his mother over a family dispute.

The young man reportedly attacked his mother for preventing him from constructing an indumba, a traditional consultation room on the family property.

According to court records, the incident occurred on August 27 at Nkhomonye.

The accused, charged under the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, allegedly threatened his mother with a bush-knife and pushed her, causing her to fall onto stony ground and sustain serious injuries.

In his defence, the accused told Magistrate Agrippa Bhembe that tensions had escalated following his father's death when he was 14.

He claimed that his mother treated him as an outcast and ignored his repeated attempts to resolve conflicts.

"My mother frustrated me and even suggested that I should be kicked out of the family homestead," he said. On the day of the incident, he insisted he wielded the bushknife only to scare his mother and not



▲ Nhlangano Magistrate's Court entrance.

to harm her.

The complainant, his mother, recounted the assault in court, explaining that she had resisted the construction of the indumba within her yard.

Injury

She credited her daughter with intervening and preventing further injury.

Magistrate Bhembe condemned the attack, describing it as embarrassing and shameful.

The court sentenced the young man to 10 months' imprisonment or a fine of E2 000, highlighting the seriousness of domestic violence and the protection owed to family members.

Nurse arrested for allegedly kidnapping girl (17)

A 49-year-old nurse from Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital in Manzini has been arrested and charged with kidnapping a 17-year-old girl in Pigg's Peak. Sicelo Khumalo, originally from Mayiwane, allegedly unlawfully deprived the teenager of her liberty on Tuesday.

According to reports, the incident began at Dabulamanzi Bar, where the minor was socializing with friends.

Khumalo reportedly called her aside, asked personal questions about her home, and offered her a lift to Manzini.

Unsuccessful

The girl repeatedly asked to be let out during the journey, but Khumalo ignored her pleas. Attempts to escape were unsuccessful while the car was in motion.

The situation escalated near Malanti, where the girl shouted for help and a struggle ensued. Khumalo eventually stopped the car, threw her bag out, and pushed her onto a roadside drainage before driving to the Pigg's Peak Police Station.

Public intervention reportedly played a role in halting further harm.

Khumalo appeared before Senior Magistrate Sindisile Zwane and was granted bail of E5 000, with strict conditions to avoid interfering with witnesses and to attend trial, scheduled for September 17.

Man sentenced to 25 years for robbery spree

A 21-year-old man from Siteki has been sentenced to a combined 25 years in prison for a series of robberies and housebreakings targeting mostly female residents.

Mangaliso 'Mangamanga' Maseko of Mahhuku, Siteki, appeared before Principal Magistrate Musa Nxumalo following his arrest, while his accomplices remain at

large.

According to court records, Maseko participated in multiple robberies, including the theft of household items valued at E24 800 from a court clerk's home.

Other victims included Nonduduzo Mkhabela, Mcebo Simelane, Zama Gamedze, and Khulile Sibiya, with stolen goods ranging from cellphones and money to wedding cakes and jewellery. In each

case, he reportedly threatened victims with knives to compel compliance.

The accused pleaded guilty and admitted to committing the crimes alongside two friends, using knives and a slasher to intimidate victims.

Some stolen items were recovered from buyers who purchased them from the men.

Sentences included nine years for housebreaking and theft, plus four years each for four counts of robbery, totalling 25 years.

Magistrate Nxumalo consolidated the custodial sentence, leaving the fine options to run separately, meaning Maseko faces a minimum of nine years imprisonment or E34 000 in fines.



'Don't Fight' Bus Service conductors fined for assaulting marshal

TWO bus conductors employed by Don't Fight Bus Service were convicted and fined for assaulting a bus marshal at Buhleni Bus Rank.

Thokozani Shiba, 29, of Mphofu, and Mancoba Vilakati, 27, of Fontotje, were each ordered to pay E2 000 or face two years' imprisonment.

Court documents revealed that the incident occurred on a Saturday when the conductors allegedly attacked Senzo Mdluli, a marshal collecting his E25 fee for services rendered.

Testifying in court, Mdluli described how Vilakati strangled him while Shiba punched him repeatedly in the face before dragging him into their bus, which later dropped him at Buhleni Plaza.

His clothes were reportedly blood-stained, and he sustained a facial cut, which was confirmed by a medical report.

In their defence, both accused claimed that Mdluli approached them aggressively while demanding payment.

Vilakati said, "If he had come politely, this would not have happened." Both pleaded guilty.

During mitigation, Shiba explained that he acted out of anger while rushing to Manzini and appealed for leniency, noting he had a pregnant wife and children to support. Vilakati also asked for mercy, citing the responsibility of caring for his two children as an orphan.

Magistrate Nkosingiphile Maseko warned against violent behaviour at bus ranks, emphasizing the rights of commuters to freely choose buses and the importance of maintaining public safety.

Half of the sentence was suspended for 12 months, provided no similar offence occurs during that period.

BRIEFS

SA's sugar farmers face 'double whammy'

NKOSINATHI Msweli's sugar cane farm in KwaDukuza - a rural, largely poor region on South Africa's eastern coast - has for three decades been a solid, albeit small, economic success story, employing eight full-time staff and 30 seasonal workers. But cheap sugar imports were already eating into his earnings when U.S. President Donald Trump announced a steep tariff on South African imports, creating what Msweli called a "double whammy" that now leaves the 53-year-old facing tough choices.

Lesotho's diamond mine cuts 20% of workforce

LESOTHO'S biggest diamond mine, Letseng, has laid off 240 workers, a fifth of its workforce, as it battles persistently low gem prices due to weak demand and an uncertain global economic environment, parent company Gem Diamonds said on Thursday. Diamonds are vital to Lesotho's economy, with the sector contributing up to 10% of its GDP and providing employment for thousands in the country of just over 2 million people.

Zimbabwe to start blueberry exports to China

ZIMBABWE can start exporting blueberries to China after it agreed a protocol on phytosanitary standards, an industry body said on Thursday. The agreement was concluded during Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa's visit to China this week, where he met President Xi Jinping during commemorations to mark 80 years since Japan's defeat at the end of World War Two. (Reuters)

'Revise credit system to boost domestic revenue'

Stories By Delisa Magagula

SOUTHERN African Research Foundation for Economy Development (SARFED) has advised revising the credit system provided by the commercial banks.

Senior Policy Advisor Dr George Choongwa said this would significantly stimulate small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to access to capital and competitiveness to boost the country's domestic revenue. He said this in his weekly press release

He said a revised and more inclusive SME business model would catalase the country's sustainable development policy framework while leveraging on its thriving human capital development.

Platforms

Dr Choongwa also advised establishing special SME digital financing system which would enable potential SMEs to leverage and build capital through digital platforms.

He said the country should establish industry-based businesses and supply chain models provide incentives to commercial banks to accommodate SMEs for business and provide tailor-made Business-to-Business models based on credit rating and real-time services.

He also said the stimulation of the private

sector by government in bid for a more competitive economic growth equally demanded the adoption and strategic integration of local SMEs in the entire supply chain ecosystem through promotion of tech-based credit system.

The strategy reportedly equally points out that financial inclusion referred to the effective access by citizens to a range of quality financial services such as credit, savings, insurance, payments and remittances provided by diverse financial service providers.

Growth

"Eswatini is one of the fastest growing countries in Africa with an average annual growth rate of 3-5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Though government remains committed in stimulating the private sector, (SMEs) are still faced with limited access to capital provided by the private commercial banking sector for expansion and competitive purposes. This has mainly been due to lack of physical collateral.

At institutional level, financial inclusion strategy was developed and implemented to carter the period from 2023 to 2028 with emphasis on stimulating both individuals and businesses have access to and effectively use financial products and services that meet their needs, are affordable and are delivered in a responsible and sustainable way," he said.



▲ Dr George Choongwa.

SMEs could be mainstreamed in income flow – Choongwa

POVERTY in the country was a multi-dimensional challenge cutting across cultural, social and institutional structures.

SARFED Senior Policy Advisor Dr George Choongwa, however, said with the establishment of digital assets with high exchange value among key institutions such as banks and suppliers, local SMEs would easily be mainstreamed into the circular flow of income.

This, he said would subsequently reduce poverty levels among many aspiring SMEs in the country.

He said limited availability of physical or tangible assets for collateral was the main challenge for boosting SME financing, which he said was a widespread fact among African countries. Dr Choongwa said the consequences of financial exclusion and inclusion significantly impacted an individual's well-being.

He elaborated that financial exclusion implied the inability to save, borrow, invest or obtain insurance, resulting in poor financial management and financial distress.

"This leads to challenges in social



and economic integration and contributes to inequality, social exclusion, and poverty. It is not true that there is no money available for every business to boost up; the only challenge is that the available capital is privately owned by commercial banks that operate on traditional availability of physical or tangible commodities that could be used as collateral.

It is prudent to note that the operationalization of the National Financial inclusion strategy in the era of digital transformation would demand the revision of widespread systems of institutions both in private and public sectors to accommodate the SMEs as strategic players for economic growth and sustainability. This is a grey area that remains a potential entry point for policy failure," he said.

Financial sector remains profitable, and stable

STATISTICAL reports indicate that financial sector and private sector in general remain profitable in the country between 2023 and 2024 periods with after-tax profits increased by 7.9% in the same period.

According to the African Development Bank Country Focus Report of 2025 on Eswatini, the capital adequacy ratio was registered at 18.3 percent while equity capital stood at 16.2%, both met their minimum requirements of 8% and 4% respectively under the Basel II capital framework.

The private sector credit reportedly grew by 8.8% annually in 2024 driven by the business and household sectors.

The report said growth in the credit sector was largely in the manufacturing, transport and communication, distribution and tourism sectors with modest contribution to economic growth.

"The non-performing loans ratio was registered at 6.9% underling the need for close supervision, to avoid escalation.

Stimulation of SMEs access to credit would stimulate the economic growth in both short and mid-term as it would strengthen the constrained domestic resource mobilization in Eswatini.

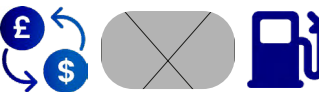
This is characterized with several challenges resulting in significant reduction in revenue collection; falling below its potential due to various challenges such large tax expenditures, a narrow tax base and inadequate enforcement mechanisms," said the report.

According to the African Development Bank Country Focus Report of 2025 on Eswatini, the capital adequacy ratio was registered at 18.3 percent while equity capital stood at 16.2%, both met their minimum requirements of 8% and 4% respectively under the Basel II capital framework.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	17.2979	17.7637
G.B. Pound	22.3323	24.0100
EURO	20.1525	20.7751
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E20.20/Litre	
Diesel	E19.80/Litre	
Paraffin	E14.55/Litre	



EswatiniBank highlights financing challenges for STI companies

Stories By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINIBANK's Managing Director Dr. Nozizwe Mulela says one of the biggest challenges facing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) businesses in Eswatini is access to financing, as many do not meet the traditional collateral requirements demanded by banks.

Speaking during the Role of STI in Economic Development Seminar on the seventh day of the Eswatini International Trade Fair, Dr. Mulela explained that while STI firms often bring creativity and problem-solving to the economy, they lack the kind of tangible security that banks traditionally rely on.

"The challenge with STI businesses is that they come with great ideas but very little in the way of collateral that banks are used to. They may not own property or large assets, and that makes it difficult to secure financing," she said.

Dr. Mulela said the banking industry itself had already felt the impact of STI, moving from hardcopy systems to digital and mobile solutions. She explained that the banking sector, once reliant on manual ledgers and handwritten records, had embraced digital tools to improve efficiency, security, and accessibility.

"In the past, everything was written in books. Customers had to come to the bank physically for even the smallest service. Then came the introduction of cards, which made banking easier. Today, we have electronic platforms, mobile applications, and digital transactions that allow people to do business from anywhere," she said.



▲ UNESWA Vice Chancellor Professor Justice Thwala, EswatiniBank MD Nozizwe Mulela and MTN FINTECH CEO Sam Shongwe were panelists during the STI Seminar.

She described this evolution as an example of how technology can transform industries, adding that entrepreneurs in other sectors could draw lessons from banking's journey.

"This shows how innovation reshapes entire industries. If entrepreneurs can apply the same thinking using technology to solve problems they will stand a better chance of building sustainable businesses," she said.

According to Dr. Mulela, one of the reasons STI companies struggle to attract cap-

ital is that traditional financing tools are not yet adapted to the realities of innovation-driven ventures.

She said many of these businesses rely on intangible assets such as intellectual property, software, or data, which are difficult to quantify as security for loans.

"Banks are trained to look for land, buildings, and vehicles tangible things. But an app or software program, even if it has great potential, is not something that can easily be

used as collateral," she explained.

She urged financial institutions and policymakers to explore new models of funding, including venture capital, grants, and innovation funds, to bridge the financing gap and support young innovators.

"We must look at different ways of supporting STI. If we rely only on traditional banking models, we will miss out on great opportunities that could transform our economy," she said.

... Copy-and-paste business models risk saturating economy

ALONGSIDE financing challenges, Dr. Mulela also raised concerns about Eswatini's entrepreneurial culture, warning that many business owners were falling into the trap of imitating others without understanding what makes certain models succeed.

She said this pattern of 'cut-and-paste' entrepreneurship was causing overcrowding in certain industries while stifling innovation.

"The challenge we have in Eswatini is that entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs are doing what I call cut-and-paste business. Everyone is copying the same idea, not knowing how that particular person is making it work. As a result, the economy in that sector becomes saturated," she said.

According to Dr. Mulela, this tendency has been most visible in retail, fast food, and service industries, where multiple businesses offering nearly identical products and services often compete for the same limited customer base.

"Once a business model seems to succeed, we suddenly have ten or twenty more of the same idea in the same small town or community. But there is no analysis of whether the demand in that area can sustain so many similar businesses," she explained.

The outcome, she noted, is that many such ventures collapse within a short time, leaving entrepreneurs frustrated and banks hesi-

tant to finance those sectors again.

Dr. Mulela argued that true entrepreneurship required creativity and differentiation. She said copying others without modification may seem safe, but it prevents the development of unique, competitive businesses. "Even if you are inspired by someone's business, you must ask: what are they doing that makes it work, and how can I do it differently or better? Without that element of innovation, you will struggle to attract customers," she said.

She added that banks are more open to supporting entrepreneurs who demonstrate originality and a clear strategy, rather than those entering overcrowded markets with no competitive advantage.

Dr. Mulela called for greater investment in entrepreneurship education and mentorship to help young people think critically about business and avoid the pitfalls of replication.

"Many young people believe entrepreneurship is just about opening a shop or selling something that seems popular. But without proper guidance, they fall into the trap of duplication. If we can mentor and train them to think critically about business, they will see opportunities where others only see risk," she said.

She highlighted STI as an avenue for entrepreneurs to differentiate themselves, pointing to areas such as agriculture technology, digital finance, and health solutions



▲ Mbongeni Bingo was the moderator during the Seminar on South Africa's eastern coast.

as untapped spaces where innovation could create lasting impact.

"Exposure to new ideas is important. If you only look at what your neighbour is doing, you will never see what is possible," she remarked.

Dr. Mulela concluded that both financing reforms and a shift in entrepreneurial mind-

set are essential if Eswatini is to build a sustainable, innovation-driven economy.

"Entrepreneurship is not just about survival. It is about solving problems, adding value, and creating wealth. That requires originality. We must change the mind-set from copy-and-paste to innovate-and-lead," she said.

SA's sugar farmers face 'double whammy' from tariffs, cheap imports

NKOSINATHI Msweli's sugar cane farm in KwaDukuza - a rural, largely poor region on South Africa's eastern coast - has for three decades been a solid, albeit small, economic success story, employing eight full-time staff and 30 seasonal workers.

But cheap sugar imports were already eating into his earnings when U.S. President Donald Trump announced a steep tariff on South African imports, creating what Msweli called a "double whammy" that now leaves the 53-year-old facing tough choices.

"All in all, I will have to cut about 20 workers from this current season," he told Reuters, as he watched his labourers chop cane from soot-blanketed fields. "The person that is here in the field maybe has 10 lives that he's supporting."

South Africa's sugar industry, valued at around 25 billion rand (\$1.42 billion), directly and indirectly supports over 300,000 jobs in a country with one of the world's highest rates of unemployment.

And in a nation where agricultural land ownership is still dominated by a white minority - a legacy of

South Africa's apartheid past - its nearly 26,000 small farmers, who work alongside 1,100 large-scale growers, are predominantly Black.

A combination of market factors and politics, however, is exposing the sector to growing headwinds.

South African farmers are struggling to compete with cheap imports, including from neighbouring Eswatini, which benefits from preferential access under a regional customs treaty. Depressed global prices resulting from large harvests in major producers like India and Brazil have, meanwhile, added to the pain.

And Trump's 30% tariff on imports from South Africa is set to deal a blow to exports.

South Africa had previously benefited from a duty-free quota for 24,000 metric tons of sugar exports to the U.S. market under Washington's flagship trade initiative for the continent, the African Growth and Opportunities Act.

While accounting for a relatively small 5% of total sugar exports, the South African Cane Growers' Association said the U.S. has served as a premium market that offered high prices, helping to sustain domestic jobs.



▲ A worker stands on harvested sugarcane at Nkosinathi Msweli's farm in KwaDukuza, a rural region on South Africa's eastern coast.

The scale of potential job losses remains unclear. But the industry association is urging the government to secure a trade deal with Washington that would safeguard exports to the United States.

"If we don't have good trade relationships with the U.S., it's going to be detrimental, not just to our sector, but to many others as well," said Pratish Sharma, a member of the association's board.

Any deal, if it comes, will likely be too late for this season, however. And as Msweli calculates the costs, he knows there's suffering on the horizon.

(Reuters)

Lesotho's biggest diamond mine cuts 20% of workforce

LESOTHO'S biggest diamond mine, Letseng, has laid off 240 workers, a fifth of its workforce, as it battles persistently low gem prices due to weak demand and an uncertain global economic environment, parent company Gem Diamonds said on Thursday.

Diamonds are vital to Lesotho's economy, with the sector contributing up to 10% of its GDP and providing employment for thousands in the country of just over 2 million people. Diamonds are also Lesotho's major export commodity, along with textiles and clothing.

Gem Diamonds said its Letseng mine, which produces some of the world's largest and most valuable gems such as the 910-carat "Lesotho Legend", had revised its mine plan and cut jobs to reduce costs.

"Sustained pricing pressure, softer demand in key markets, ongoing macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainty, and tariff uncertainties in respect of India, combine to create difficult trading conditions," Gem Diamonds CEO Clifford Elphick said in a statement.

Gem Diamonds on Thursday reported a half-year loss of \$11.7 million, compared to a \$2.1 million profit a year earlier, after revenue plunged 42% on the back of weaker prices.

It booked a \$10.7 million impairment on the value of Letseng due to the weak diamond prices.

The company realised an average price of \$1,008 per carat in the six months to June 30, 26% lower than last year. Its half-year production was 47,125 carats, compared to 55,873 carats during the same period last year. (Reuters)



▲ Diamonds are vital to Lesotho's economy, with the sector contributing up to 10% of its GDP and providing employment for thousands



▲ A woman arrives to harvest blueberries at Talana farm in rural Chegutu district, Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe to start blueberry exports to China after breakthrough agreement

ZIMBABWE can start exporting blueberries to China after it agreed a protocol on phytosanitary standards, an industry body said on Thursday.

The agreement was concluded during Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa's visit to China this week, where he met President Xi Jinping during commemorations to mark 80 years since Japan's defeat at the end of World War Two.

Zimbabwe's Horticultural Development Council (HDC) said the agreement "opens the door for local growers to expand into one of the world's fastest-growing blueberry markets".

The scale of Zimbabwe's blueberry exports to China would be guided by the new protocol's sanitary and phytosanitary requirements and the related compliance costs, the HDC said in a statement.

Zimbabwe, whose blueberry production is

among the fastest-growing globally, is projected to produce 12,000 metric tons of blueberries in 2025, from 8,000 metric tons in 2024. Global consumption has increased in recent years due to its perceived health benefits and Zimbabwe, where climatic conditions allow high yields from open field planting and early delivery into export markets, is looking to capitalise on booming demand.

However, the HDC says Zimbabwe's blueberry production potential is limited by high interest rates and limited access to long-term financing, as well as a rule requiring all exporters to retain only 75% of their export earnings in U.S. dollars while converting the balance into local currency.

Growers are also seeking income tax holidays, a removal of import duty for key inputs and a reduction in land levies as they nurse the nascent industry.

(Reuters)

Chinese firms still want Nvidia chips despite government pressure not to buy

ALIBABA, opens new tab, ByteDance and other Chinese tech firms remain keen on Nvidia's, opens new tab artificial intelligence chips despite regulators in Beijing strongly discouraging them from such purchases, four people with knowledge of procurement discussions said.

They want reassurance that their orders of Nvidia's H20 model, which the U.S. firm in July regained permission to sell in China, are being processed, and are closely monitoring Nvidia's plans for a more powerful chip, tentatively named the B30A and which is based on its Blackwell architecture, two of the people said.

The B30A - if approved for sale by Washington - is likely to cost about double the H20, which currently sells for between \$10,000 and \$12,000, those two people said.

Chinese tech firms perceive the potential B30A pricing, reported by Reuters for the first time, as a good deal, they added. One said the B30A promises to be up to six times more powerful than the H20.

Both chips are downgraded versions of models sold outside China, developed specifically to comply with U.S. export restrictions.

All sources for this article were not authorised to speak to media and declined to be identified.



▲ Nvidia logo and Chinese flag are seen in this illustration.

The extent to which China, which generated 13% of Nvidia's revenue in the past financial year, can have access to cutting-edge AI chips is one of the biggest flashpoints in the U.S.-Sino war for tech supremacy.

On one hand, the U.S. has retreated from its previous position of more severe restrictions on Nvidia sales of advanced chips to China. Nvidia and other critics of the con-

trols say it is better if Chinese firms continue to use its chips - which work with Nvidia's software tools - so that developers do not completely switch over to offerings from rivals like Huawei (HWT.UL).

U.S. President Donald Trump has also struck a deal with Nvidia for it to give the U.S. government 15% of its H20 revenue.

At the same time, China is keen for its

tech industry to wean itself off U.S. chips. Chinese authorities have summoned companies, including Tencent (0700.HK), opens new tab and ByteDance, over their purchases of the H20, asking them to explain their reasons and expressing concerns over information risks, sources said last month.

They have, however, not been ordered to cease purchases of Nvidia products.

LIMITED DOMESTIC CHIP SUPPLY

Despite that pressure, demand for Nvidia chips remains strong in China due to constrained supplies of products from domestic rivals such as Huawei and Cambricon (688256.SS), opens new tab, the four sources said.

Another three sources who are involved in engineering operations at Chinese tech firms also said Nvidia's chips perform better than domestic products.

Alibaba, ByteDance and Tencent did not reply to Reuters requests for comment. Huawei and Cambricon also did not respond to Reuters queries.

Asked about its position versus rivals in China, Nvidia said in a statement that the "competition has undeniably arrived." It declined further comment.

Lack of clarity about Nvidia's prospects in China led the U.S. firm in late August to issue a tepid quarterly sales forecast that excluded potential revenue from the world's second-biggest economy. (Reuters)

How North Korean hackers are using fake job offers to steal cryptocurrency

NORTH Korean hackers are saturating the cryptocurrency industry with credible-sounding job offers as part of their campaign to steal digital cash, according to new research, raw data, and interviews.

The problem is becoming so common that job applicants now regularly screen recruiters for signs they might be acting on Pyongyang's behalf.

Twenty-five experts, victims, and corporate representatives that Reuters spoke to agreed that the problem was ubiquitous.

"It happens to me all the time and I'm sure it happens to everybody in this space," said Carlos Yanez, a business development executive at the Switzerland-based blockchain analytics firm Global Ledger, who was among those recently targeted by the thieves, according to data supplied by cybersecurity companies SentinelOne and Validin, who are publishing a report about the cyber campaign, opens new tab on Thursday.

Yanez said that while he avoided getting hacked, the quality of masquerades carried out by North Koreans had improved significantly in the past year. "It's scary how far they've come," he said.

Although there's no publicly available estimate of how much money is taken through this tactic alone, North Korean hackers were believed to have stolen at least \$1.34 billion worth of cryptocurrency last year, according to blockchain intelligence firm Chainalysis. The U.S. and United Nations monitors have both alleged that Pyongyang uses the thefts to support its sanctioned weapons program.

Allegations that Pyongyang targets the blockchain world with sophisticated scams aren't new. Late last year the Federal Bureau of Investigation issued a public warning, opens new tab saying that North Korea was "aggressively" targeting the cryptocurrency industry with "complex and elaborate" social engineering schemes. But Reuters' reporting, which seven targets corroborated

with screenshots of their conversations with the hackers, provides previously unreported details of how they trick their targets, along with a detailed breakdown of their tactics.

First, a recruiter would reach out over LinkedIn or Telegram with a pitch for a blockchain-related job. "We are currently expanding our team," said a January 20 LinkedIn message sent to Victoria Perepel from a recruiter purporting to represent Bitwise Asset Management. "We are particularly looking for individuals who are passionate about cryptocurrency markets."

After a brief back-and-forth about the supposed job and compensation, the recruiter would encourage prospective applicants to visit an obscure website to run a skills test and record a video. At this point, several targets became suspicious.

Why not simply do a live interview over a better known video platform, like Google Meet or Zoom? That was the objection raised by machine learning entrepreneur Olof Haglund on Jan. 21 when he was approached by Wieslaw Slizewski, who purported to be a technical recruiter from the online trading platform Robinhood.

Slizewski refused to budge, insisting that Haglund download code to shoot the video.

"We follow a structured hiring process, and the video assessment is a key part of our evaluation to ensure consistency and fairness for all candidates," Slizewski said in a LinkedIn message.

Haglund ended up terminating the interview, but others didn't. One product manager for a U.S. cryptocurrency firm, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he didn't want to be known as a job seeker, said he recorded the video and sent it on to a person who claimed to be recruiting for cryptocurrency company Ripple Labs. It wasn't until that evening, when he realized that \$1,000 worth of ether and Solana was missing from the digital wallet he kept on his computer, that he realized he'd been hoodwinked.



▲ Olof Haglund, a Stockholm-based entrepreneur, poses for a photo in Stockholm, Sweden.

When he looked for the purported Ripple recruiter's LinkedIn profile, it was already gone.

In another case, consultant Ben Humbert was speaking via LinkedIn with Mirela Tafili, a recruiter claiming to be acting on behalf of the cryptocurrency exchange Kraken about a project management role. Tafili asked Humbert to complete a "brief virtual interview" and provided a link which Tafili said would help them "expedite the process" and move him to the next stage. Humbert said he became suspicious and terminated the conversation.

Ripple and Bitwise did not return messages seeking comment. In a statement, Robinhood said it was "aware of a campaign earlier this year that attempted to impersonate several crypto companies, including Robinhood" and that it had taken action to disable

web domains linked to the scam. LinkedIn said in a statement that the fake recruiter accounts identified by Reuters were "previously actioned." Telegram said scams were weeded out wherever they were found. Reuters' attempts to reach the hackers were unsuccessful.

SentinelOne and Validin attribute the thefts to a North Korean operation previously dubbed "Contagious Interview", opens new tab by cybersecurity company Palo Alto Networks. The researchers tracking the campaign concluded that the North Koreans were behind it based on several factors, including their use of internet protocol addresses and emails linked to previous North Korean hacking activity.

(Reuters)

Sudanese journalist returns to newsrooms decimated by war

WHEN journalist Shamael Elnoor left Sudan at the outbreak of war in 2023, Sudanese newspapers were already suffering under an economic crisis and the worldwide shift to digital news.

Then the fighting brought presses to an immediate standstill - leaving busy newsrooms in Khartoum empty and ransacked.

A prominent freelance journalist known for her coverage of politics and the troubled Darfur region, Elnoor returning to Sudan's capital this year after the army regained control.

"Sudanese press institutions, especially print newspapers stopped completely and lost their ability to perform their required role," she added of the press' demise.

Civil war between the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has crushed Sudan's economy, pushed half of the population of 50 million into hunger, and claimed tens of thousands of lives.

It also decimated Sudan's media just as it was enjoying a freer period after decades of state control under autocrat Omar al-Bashir.

Independent newspapers, television channels, and websites had sprung up, though economic troubles meant publishers were shutting down or reducing print operations before the war.

Ad revenues then dried up as the war decimated businesses, Elnoor said.

DEATHS AND DEPARTURES

According to the Sudanese Journalists' Syndicate, after the war be-



▲ Sudanese journalist, Shamael Elnoor, inspects her room at home after it was destroyed, on her return to the ruins of a once-vibrant area housing newspaper publishing offices, highlighting concerns over an industry paralysed by the ongoing war, in the capital Khartoum, Suda.

gan some 27 newspapers ceased operations, along with 32 radio stations and eight television stations.

About 1,000 journalists lost their jobs as they scattered across Sudan and the world. Among those who remained, 31 journalists have been killed, the syndicate's Secretary General Mohamed Abdelaziz told Reuters.

Digital outlets have been springing up, but most are sponsored by the warring parties or other political interests, and there is a parallel disinformation war on social media.

Elnoor left her home in Omdurman, across the Nile from Khartoum, a month after the war erupted.

She headed first to Sennar, a city

to the south on the Blue Nile, among the 14 million Sudanese who fled their homes.

She eventually went to the United Arab Emirates, before coming back this year after the army's recapture of Khartoum, spurring the return of about 2 million Sudanese.

Elnoor, who never stopped publishing online, came back to find her home destroyed, but said the deserted and looted newsrooms were even more painful to see.

With fewer local reporters on the ground, warring parties watching them closely and requiring permits, and some violence by fighters towards journalists, Sudan's media is hanging by a thread. (Reuters)

Congolese women turn to mining for survival after rebel attacks

MAMAN Soki is among a small group of Congolese women undertaking heavy mining work for survival after escaping a deadly attack on her village by Islamic State-aligned rebels that killed her daughter and her sister.

In April, the 49-year-old widow left her home in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo with her son, grandson and her sister's children to flee the Allied Democratic Forces - one of many armed groups in the mineral-rich region.

Soki now works alongside two other women at Pangoyi gold mine, lugging 30 kg sacks of debris up a muddy slope for a few dollars a day to feed the four children in her care.

"Sometimes we want to enter the pits to dig, but we're told women aren't allowed," Soki said in an interview. "That's why we always carry the already-dug sand for processing."

A photograph of her lost sibling is among the few reminders of the life Soki left behind.

Soki now cares for her sister's two small children, as well as her orphaned grandson. Soki's 12-year-old son Muhindo Obed looks after his



▲ Maman Soki, a Congolese artisanal miner, internally displaced by the Islamic State-affiliated Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels, poses for a photograph after a Reuters interview at an open-pit mine.

three adopted siblings while Soki is at work.

In Congo, mining is traditionally dominated by men, but women are often driven to undertake the back-breaking work to survive.

Women in mining often face discrimination and harassment by male colleagues, and perform lower-paying tasks, according to the national association RENAFEM, a Western-funded group that aims to

protect the rights of female workers.

Soki hopes to save enough to open a small food store and leave mining behind, but there is little left over after paying for the children's food, school fees and expenses.

"We worry for her safety when she goes to Pangoyi," her son Obed said.

In July Islamic State-backed rebels killed at least 43 worshippers in a church in Komanda,

(Reuters)



▲ Beneficiaries from different Internally Displaced Persons camps stand behind a food aid truck waiting to receive support following the exit of USAID, at a World Food Programme distribution centre in Dikwa, Borno State, Nigeria.

Hunger grows in Nigeria as aid cuts reduce food supplies

DESTITUTE families displaced by conflict in northeastern Nigeria are finding nutrition centres closed or running low on food as a result of a collapse in aid funding from the United States and other Western countries.

Africa's most populous nation has 31 million people facing food shortages, more than any other country, according to the U.N. The worst crisis is in the northeast, where 2.3 million people have been forced from their homes and farmlands during 15 years of war between Islamist insurgents and the army.

Hadiza Ibrahim has been displaced for 10 years. She and her husband and their eight children are sheltering at a camp in Dikwa, in Borno State, the centre of the conflict. They rely on a local nutrition centre where supplies are dwindling.

"I may not be able to eat tomorrow," said Ibrahim as she lined up at the site to receive meagre rations.

Ali Abani, who oversees security at the site, said many beneficiaries who had received food for over a decade came this month and found there was nothing left for them.

Until this year, the United States was providing 60% of funding for humanitarian operations in Nigeria. That came to an abrupt halt when President Donald Trump froze aid in January, saying other countries should step up.

But Britain, France and Germany, also important donors, have instead cut their own aid budgets and others have also announced cuts.

The results on the ground in Nigeria have been devastating. The U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) has closed 150 nutrition centres in the northeast during the lean season between harvests, which runs from June to November, while other aid agencies have shut altogether.

"It meant that hundreds of

thousands of children stopped receiving essential treatment, and the number of children who needed hospitalisation skyrocketed," said Chi Lael, the WFP spokesperson in Nigeria.

At the Dikwa site, run by multiple agencies, Reuters reporters saw mothers and emaciated children lying on mats on the floor of a health centre because its 15 beds were occupied.

A health worker was feeding one of the children a packet of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), a highly nutritious paste typically made from peanuts, sugar, milk powder, oil, vitamins and minerals. But stocks were too low to treat all the children being brought to the centre.

"We're turning away patients," said Bukar Tijjani, a doctor with humanitarian group InterSOS.

The aid group Save the Children last week estimated that 3.5 million children across Nigeria required treatment for severe acute malnutrition, but said only 64% of the 629,000 cartons of RUTF needed to get through the lean season had been secured.

The WFP said the severity of the crisis facing children was unprecedented. Acutely malnourished children are far more likely to die from common infections than well-nourished children.

"We know that 600,000 children are at risk of mortality -- a figure we've never experienced before," said Lael.

The U.S. embassy in Nigeria said on Wednesday the U.S. government would contribute \$32.5 million to the WFP to provide food assistance and nutrition support to internally displaced people in conflict-affected areas.

It did not say what had prompted the decision to provide the funds, a fraction of U.S. contributions in previous years and of the overall amounts required.

(Reuters)

Trump administration unlawfully cut Harvard's funding, US judge rules



▲ A woman walks on campus at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.

A federal judge on Wednesday ruled that U.S. President Donald Trump's administration unlawfully terminated about \$2.2 billion in grants awarded to Harvard University and can no longer cut off research funding to the prestigious Ivy League school.

The decision, opens new tab by U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs in Boston marked a major legal victory for Harvard as it seeks to cut a deal that could bring an end to the White House's multi-front conflict with the nation's oldest and richest university.

The Cambridge, Massachusetts-based school became a central focus of the administration's broad campaign to leverage federal funding to force change at U.S. universities, which Trump says are gripped by antisemitic and "radical left" ideologies.

The administration cancelled hundreds of

grants awarded to Harvard researchers on the grounds the school failed to do enough to address harassment of Jewish students on its campus.

Harvard sued, arguing the Trump administration was retaliating against it in violation of its free-speech rights after it refused to meet officials' demands that it overhaul its governance, hiring and academic programs to align with their ideological agenda.

Burroughs, an appointee of Democratic President Barack Obama, agreed, saying while Harvard had tolerated hateful behavior for too long, the Trump administration "used antisemitism as a smokescreen for a targeted, ideologically-motivated assault on this country's premier universities."

She said the administration's pressure campaign resulted in it terminating Harvard's grants without complying with the

law and retaliating against the school in violation of its free speech rights under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

Burroughs said it was the job of courts to safeguard academic freedom and "ensure that important research is not improperly subjected to arbitrary and procedurally infirm grant terminations, even if doing so risks the wrath of a government committed to its agenda no matter the cost."

She barred the administration from terminating or freezing any additional federal funding to Harvard and blocked it from continuing to withhold payment on existing grants or refusing to award new funding to the school in the future.

White House spokesperson Liz Huston in a statement vowed to appeal the ruling by an "activist Obama-appointed judge," saying Harvard "does not have a constitutional right to taxpayer dollars and remains ineligible for grants in the future."

Harvard President Alan Garber in a message to the campus community said the ruling "validates our arguments in defense of the University's academic freedom, critical scientific research, and the core principles of American higher education."

Garber did not mention the status of settlement talks with the administration, which Trump during a cabinet meeting last week said he wanted to see result in Harvard paying "nothing less than \$500 million" as it had "been very bad."

Garber said that even as the school acknowledged the key principles Burroughs' ruling affirmed, Harvard was going to be "mindful of the changing landscape in which we seek to fulfill our mission."

Three other Ivy League schools have made deals with the administration, including Co-

lumbia University, which in July agreed to pay \$220 million to restore federal research money that had been denied because of allegations the university allowed antisemitism to fester on campus.

As with Columbia, the Trump administration took actions against Harvard related to the pro-Palestinian protest movement that roiled its campus and other universities in the wake of the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel and Israel's war in Gaza.

Harvard has said it has taken steps to ensure its campus is welcoming to Jewish and Israeli students, who it acknowledges experienced "vicious and reprehensible" treatment following the onset of Israel's war in Gaza.

The administration's decision to cancel grants was one of many actions it has taken against Harvard. It has also sought to bar international students from attending the school; threatened Harvard's accreditation status; and opened the door to cutting off more funds by finding it violated federal civil rights law.

Burroughs in a separate case has already barred the administration from halting Harvard's ability to host international students, who comprise about a quarter of the school's student body.

Harvard litigated the grant funding case alongside the school's faculty chapter of the American Association of University Professors, which opposes the idea of the institution cutting a deal with Trump.

"We hope this decision makes clear to Harvard's administration that bargaining the Harvard community's rights in a compromise with the government is unacceptable,"

(Reuters)

Portugal investigates crash on historic Lisbon funicular that killed 16

PORTUGUESE authorities were investigating on Thursday what caused a Lisbon funicular railway popular with tourists to hurtle down a hill, killing at least 16 people and injuring 22 when it crashed into a building.

The mangled wreckage of a yellow tram-like carriage, which carries people up and down a steep hillside in the Portuguese capital, lay where it had left the track and hit a building on Wednesday, just metres from its twin at the bottom of the steep 265-metre slope.

The traction cable linking them had snapped.

Lisbon resident Abel Esteves, 75, and his wife and grandson were among 40 passengers in the lower car who saw the carriage plunge towards them before derailing at the last second.

"I told my wife: 'We're all going to die here'," he said. "It picked up a brutal speed, took a slight turn and hit the building with a loud bang."

FOREIGNERS AMONG LISBON FUNICULAR DEAD

Flags flew at half-mast as Portugal declared a day of mourning and the city's two other funiculars were shut for inspections. The Pope sent condolences and blessings to victims, relatives and rescuers.

"This is one of the greatest human tragedies in our recent history," Prime Minister Luis Montenegro said in a press conference on Thursday, adding that he expected the investigation into the causes of the accident to be concluded swiftly.

He said Portugal's state airline TAP had offered to provide transport for the families



▲ People work at the site of the accident after Gloria funicular railway car, a popular tourist attraction, derailed and crashed, resulting in multiple casualties, according to authorities, in Lisbon, Portugal.

of the victims and to repatriate the injured and the deceased.

Thirty-eight people were hurt in the accident, with 15 killed at the scene while one more died in hospital overnight. Lisbon's director of emergency services Margarida Martins had earlier said that 17 had died.

Among the injured were four Portuguese, two Germans, two Spanish, one Korean, one Cape Verdean, one Canadian, one Italian, one French citizen, one Swiss and one Moroccan, Martins said.

Authorities did not identify the victims by

name, but said some foreign nationals were among the dead.

Eliane Chaves, a Brazilian who has lived in Lisbon for 20 years, said she walked past the Ascensor da Glória - one of the symbols of the city - every day.

"People say that it was negligence but it was not negligence," she said, tears streaming down her cheeks. "They supervise it thoroughly. It was an accident, just like a plane or car accident can happen."

CABLE PROBLEMS REPORTED ON FUNICULAR

Manuel Leal, leader of the Fectrans union, told local TV workers had complained that problems with the tension of the cable that hauls the carriages had made braking difficult, but that it was too early to say if that was the cause of the crash. The municipal transport company Carris said in a statement that "all maintenance protocols have been carried out", including monthly and weekly maintenance and daily inspections.

Police took photos of the wreckage and inspected the braking system on the undamaged carriage.

The two cars, each capable of carrying around 40 people, alternately climb the slope and descend as electric motors pull the cable linking them.

That cable appears to have snapped, a fire brigade official said. Seemingly unable to check its descent, the carriage entered the turn too fast, ploughing into the cobblestone pavement and crashing into a building.

The lower car jolted back a couple of metres (yards) and was apparently undamaged, but video from bystanders showed several passengers jumping out of its windows.

The line, which opened in 1885, connects Lisbon's downtown area near the Restauradores Square with the Bairro Alto, or Upper Quarter, famous for its nightlife, and transports around 3 million people a year.

Some local media reported that a German family-of-three had been among the victims. The father had died in the crash while the mother was seriously hurt and their 3-year-old child suffered minor injuries, they reported.

(Reuters)



By Siphesihle Dlamini
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THIS weekend in the Kingdom of Eswatini is packed with exciting shows and events.

To ensure your weekend is filled with fun and entertainment, be sure to check out one of the featured events highlighted by Eswatini Daily News.

►► HELLO SPRING TIME

When: Friday
Where: 23:28 Lounge
Fee: Free

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 DopeDeep, a maestro of smooth yet powerful house beats, and Young Love, whose unique sound has steadily carved a space in the local music scene.

►► GQOM V SOUL

When: Saturday
Where: Espinho Lounge
Fee: E50

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. 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 flogs, vests, and hats, ensuring that the venue maintains a certain standard of decorum and fashion.

►► DICKIES PARTY

When: Saturday
Where: Dé Lounge
Fee: Free

The countdown is officially on, and all roads are leading 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



Ultimate guide to this weekend's biggest shows

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. 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.

►► FOAM PARTY DAY VIBES

When: Friday
Where: Mdzimba View Shisanyama
Fee: E50

South African music sensation Dladla Mshunqisi is set to electrify Mdzimba View Shisanyama as the headline act for the highly anticipated second edition of Foam Party Day Vibes. Taking place on September 6, 2025, this event promises a lively celebration of music, dance, and entertainment, attracting fans from across the region eager to experience the infectious beats of one of Africa's most

dynamic artists. Now in its second year, Foam Party Day Vibes has quickly become a favourite among partygoers. The 2025 lineup features standout supporting acts such as Snyder, President, Slim Deep, Sbuda, Castle, MaWillies, and Ma Ten Ten, each contributing their unique energy and style. Together, they will deliver an unforgettable night filled with pulsating rhythms, vibrant foam effects, and an electric atmosphere. Tickets are priced to suit a variety of attendees, with general admission available at E50 before 8 pm and E70 afterwards, ensuring accessibility for many fans. For those seeking premium experience, VIP tickets priced at E150 offer exclusive amenities and prime viewing areas for full immersion in the event.

►► SUNDAY SOUL LOOKOUT

When: Sunday
Where: Brussels Lounge
Fee: Free

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

Lounge. Scheduled for Sunday, September 7, 2025, the event is set to be an immersive journey into soulful rhythms and deep grooves, kicking off at 2 pm and continuing late into the night.

The Sunday Soul Lookout event at Brussels Lounge will not only spotlight D.General but also feature an impressive lineup of supporting artists. Vasco & De Dang, Mthizo, Crooks, Wicked, Fantasy, Bandora, Bhekzin, and Mafaka are set to complement the headliner's performance, promising a diverse and dynamic musical experience for attendees. The event's free entry further encourages a broad audience to engage with the vibrant local and regional music culture. Brussels Lounge, known for its intimate atmosphere and commitment to showcasing quality live performances, provides the perfect venue for this celebration of deep house and soulful sounds.

The event is expected to draw music enthusiasts from across Manzini and beyond, eager to experience the rich textures and compelling rhythms that define D.General's style.

Pretty Masompisi headlines New Gen Concert activation

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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MUSIC enthusiasts have much to look forward to this August as the rising star Pretty Masompisi takes centre stage at the highly anticipated New Gen Concert Pop Up Activation.

Scheduled for August 7, 2025, at the scenic Mdzimba View Shisanyama, the event promises an electrifying evening of live performances, vibrant rhythms, and an immersive celebration of contemporary Afro-pop and Hip-Hop-Infused sounds. Entry to the concert is set at E100, offering fans an affordable opportunity to experience some of the freshest talents in the region.

Alongside Pretty Masompisi, the lineup features a dynamic roster of artists including ItsAllBlaq, DJ Expo, Fargo, Bruce, and Drum Rhythm, each bringing their unique flair to the stage, ensuring a diverse and engaging musical journey for attendees.

Pretty Masompisi, born Nompendolo Mbhele, hails from Durban but was raised in Bhethania, Port Shepstone. From a young age, she displayed a natural affinity with music, beginning to sing at just 10 years old.

Her soulful voice and heartfelt performances quickly garnered attention, but it was her breakthrough on the social media platform TikTok that propelled her into the spotlight. Through emotionally resonant videos, she connected with a broad audience, showcasing the depth and authenticity of her artistry.

Her official music career took off in 2024 with the release of her debut single “Manxebanxeba,” a collaboration featuring Danger Flex and Mlungisi. The track was met with positive acclaim, setting the stage for further success. Following this, Pretty



▲ Pretty Masompisi.

Masompisi released a series of standout collaborations, such as “Ngiyaqala Ukujola” and “Jehova Ngikhumbile Nani,” each highlighting her ability to seamlessly blend Afro Pop rhythms with gospel-inspired melodies.

One of her most notable releases, “Ekhaya,” featuring Duncan and Olefied

Khetha, solidified her reputation as a formidable talent in the South African music scene. The song’s heartfelt lyrics and captivating arrangement resonated widely, earning her critical praise and a growing fan base. Subsequent tracks like “Ngi Happy” and “Uthe Uyangithanda” further demonstrated her versatility.

Mpho.wav to entice Eswatini Farmers Market

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

South African Mpho Wav’s talent caught the eye of Sun-EL Musician in 2020, leading to his entry into EL World Music and subsequent EP “In The Den.” In 2022, he ventured into solo releases with “Moya,” featuring Brenden Praise, captivating audiences as an independent artist.

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

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

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



▲ Mpho.wav



▲ Dladla Mshunqisi.

Dladla Mshunqisi brings Gqom vibes to Mdzimba View

SOUTH African music sensation Dladla Mshunqisi is gearing up to bring an electrifying atmosphere to Mdzimba View Shisanyama with his headline performance at the highly anticipated second edition of Foam Party Day Vibes.

Scheduled for September 6, 2025, this event promises to be a vibrant celebration of music, dance, and entertainment, drawing fans from across the region to experience the infectious rhythms of one of Africa’s most dynamic artists.

Foam Party Day Vibes, now in its second year, has quickly become a must-attend event for party enthusiasts. The 2025 edition will feature a strong lineup of supporting acts including Snyder, President, Slim Deep, Sbuda, Castle, MaWillies, and Ma Ten Ten, each bringing their own flavour and energy to the occasion. Together, they will create an unforgettable experience filled with pulsating beats, vibrant foam effects, and an atmosphere charged with excitement.

Tickets

Ticket pricing for the event is designed to accommodate a wide range of attendees. General admission tickets are priced at E50 before 8 pm and E70 thereafter, making it accessible for many fans eager to enjoy the festivities. For those seeking more exclusive experience, VIP tickets are available at E150, offering enhanced amenities and prime viewing areas to fully immerse themselves in the event.

Dladla Mshunqisi, whose real name is Anele Dladla, hails from KwaMashu, South Africa, and has rapidly risen to prominence within the Gqom music scene. His breakthrough came with the release of the anthem “Memeza,” which immediately captured the attention of dance music lovers. However, it was his collaboration on the track “Omunye” with Distruction Boyz and Benny Maverick that truly catapulted him onto the continental stage. The song not only dominated charts but also became a defining sound for the Gqom genre, characterised by its deep, pulsating beats and hypnotic rhythms.

The artist’s debut album, Umshunqo, released in 2018 under the Afrotainment label, further established his reputation as a versatile and charismatic performer. The album showcased Dladla’s unique vocal style and ability to blend traditional South African sounds with contemporary electronic beats, creating music that resonates locally and internationally. Including “Omunye” on the soundtrack of the blockbuster film Black Panther was a landmark achievement, exposing his music to a global audience and cementing his status as an influential figure in African music.

Somizi Mhlongo warns fans of impostors trying to cash in



▲ Somizi Mhlongo.

THE scammers are at it again, but this time with a different celebrity.

South African media personality and reality TV star Somizi Mhlongo recently took to social media to warn his fans about scammers who are using his name to swindle people's money.

He warned people: "I'd never ask u for money nor send u a dm if I don't know u personally." The "Sompire" owner shared two screenshots of two Instagram accounts that have duplicated his user name as well as the same profile picture as he does on his official account, claiming to have a "surprise package" or a mysterious "win" that is only accessible if you DM their numbers.

One message read: "Hi! I've noticed your comments, you're such a big fan! Kindly send me a message on Whatsapp to win. I have something for you. I'm waiting your message. Say Pay Me."

Even though these two screenshots are the only ones that Mhlongo shared, it is important to note that there is a high chance that there are quite a lot of accounts that are pretending to be him.

Mhlongo is also not the only victim of these scammers, as there are a lot of celebrities who have faced such in the past, includ-

ing Connie Ferguson, who also warned their fans to be careful of these scammers.

Here's how to recognise a scammer:

- If the followers of the account are low, especially if it's a "celebrity account".
- Always look out for spelling errors since many of these scam messages are filled with a lot of spelling errors or sentences that do not make sense.
- A celebrity will never ask for money unless they issue an official and professional statement about it.
- Spam messages are always filled with a lot of unnecessary emojis.
- If there is a message about prize money or exclusive offers, it's a scam.
- Look out for misspelt names or random numbers in the account handle, e.g. @official_somizi231
- No verification badge (a blue checkmark) is a common giveaway that you are dealing with a scammer.
- If the quality of the pictures on the page is poor, it's a scam because a lot of celebrities consider themselves brands and posting high-quality pictures is important for them. (IOL)



▲ Veteran actress Vatiswa Ndara.

Veteran actress accuses industry of 'blacklisting' her

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.

Price of knowing your worth

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 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.

Sexual harassment case

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.

(Sunday World)

Artists earn R11 in royalties while SAMRO directors bag up to R125K each per meeting

ANOTHER storm is brewing at the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) as glaring pay disparities come to light.

In a recent meeting, it was revealed that ordinary members receive as little as R11 for their contributions, while independent board members are pocketing between R87, 000 and R125, 000 per meeting.

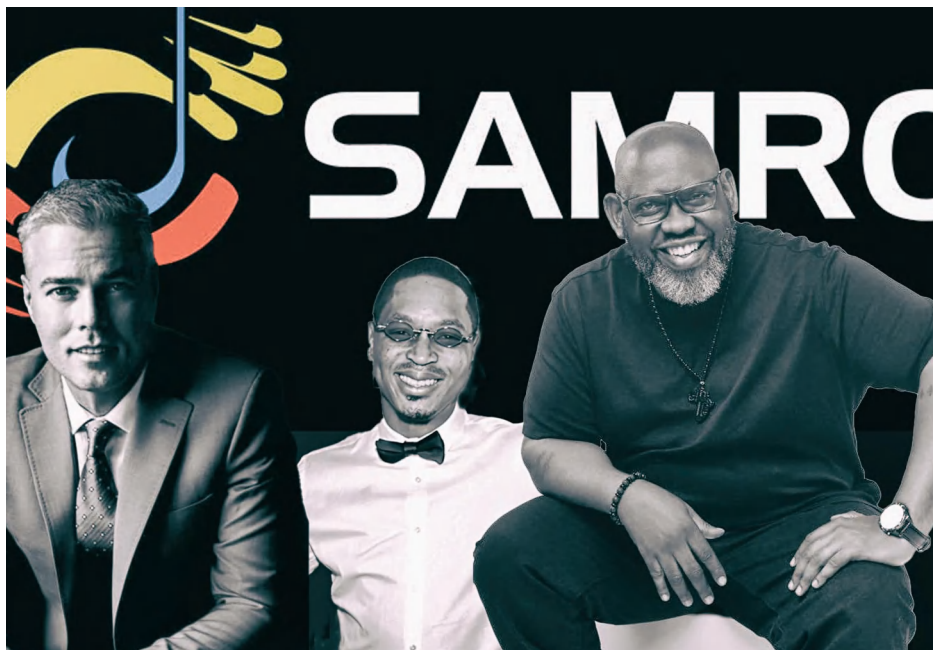
A document shared during the meeting shows that SAMRO chairperson Nicholas Maweni takes home R125, 000 per board meeting. This is followed by his deputy, Sisa Mayekiso, who pockets R100, 000 per meeting. While Sibongile Vilakazi and Veronica Motloutsi earn R87, 000 per meeting. These board meetings take place four times a year.

Artists demand answers

One SAMRO member and kwaito group Trompies artist, Eugene Mthethwa, shared that he earned R14.29. These earnings were from different songs across various music platforms. And the platforms include YouTube, Facebook, Spotify, and Netflix, among others.

"This clearly sends a message that there is no value in being a member. All we are doing is creating a pool of funds to cushion the lives of the CEO and board members, especially the independent ones. Please give me the logic behind this: R516, 000 that Maweni earns a year for four board meetings is 469,091% of the amount earned by members who get R11 in royalties. What value do we derive from this supposed skill or talent that earns us R11?" he asked. He added that being a board member is not an exclusive skill.

"Give us a business case that proves the board is a rare talent we must retain at all costs. The expensive board members cannot be afforded. And therefore must be excused, along with their fan and supporter — the CEO, who sings their tune for lunch," he said, adding that COO Mpho Mofikoe is the



only one who has brought real value.

'Directors loot as artists starve'

"No wonder she is suspended, and only the useless, corrupt ones are left behind to further loot. By the way, Maweni was Minister Nathi Mthethwa's chief of staff. While Annabelle Lebethe was CEO of one of DSAC's entities (Museums). It is birds of a feather. Mediocrity to the core," fumed Mthethwa, who is also an EFF member of parliament.

Arts activist Owen Ndlovu said this is standard practice.

"These figures don't surprise us. Some artists earn even less than R11 and often have no idea which platform played their music. SAMRO lacks a proper tracking system. It doesn't verify which radio stations aired the songs or for how long. And basically just hands out whatever amount they decide you're worth," said Ndlovu.

The issue of artists not receiving their roy-

alties is well documented. For years, artists have complained about not being paid. And the Fundudzi investigation report revealed that some publishers unduly claimed undocumented works.

Oversight, accountability questioned

SAMRO has been the primary collecting society for music royalties in South Africa for decades. It is responsible for ensuring that composers, songwriters, and music publishers are fairly compensated whenever their work is performed or broadcast.

The entity is responsible for distributing millions in royalties annually. And the controversy raises broader questions about oversight and accountability. Also whether the system is working in the best interests of the very artists it was established to support.

SAMRO was approached for comment, but they had not responded at the time of publishing. (Sunday World)

CAFFEINE is a stimulant found in food and beverages like coffee.

Drinking a cup of caffeinated coffee gives you a boost of energy that can lift you out of a bad mood. It's one reason why we consume over 600 million cups of coffee in the U.S. each day.

Research into coffee and depression has found that people tend to experience less severe symptoms when they drink coffee.

Studies of the effects of coffee on the body have found other positive benefits, like lowering the risk of getting cancer or having a stroke. Drinking coffee in moderation can also reduce our risk of developing dementia and Parkinson's disease. The protective compounds found in coffee beans, along with the effects of caffeine, can improve our mental cognitive abilities and lower the potential of developing Alzheimer's disease.

How Coffee Impacts Your Depression Symptoms

Depression affects millions of people throughout the U.S. The severity of depression symptoms varies from person to person. Some of the most common symptoms of depression include having little interest in activities that used to bring you pleasure, difficulty concentrating, and a lack of energy. People diagnosed with clinical depression experience symptoms for at least two weeks.

Researchers became curious about whether the stimulative properties found in coffee could relieve symptoms of depression. One published study showed a correlation between drinking more coffee and a reduction in the severity of depression symptoms. A separate study focused on middle-aged adults produced similar results.

It appears that drinking coffee can help people diagnosed with depression. However, that doesn't necessarily mean it should become a staple of your diet. While there are some health benefits to drinking coffee, there are also drawbacks to excess coffee consumption.

The Risks of Drinking Too Much Coffee

Boosts of caffeine have become a staple among working adults and students looking for energy to push through with their jobs or studies. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers four regular-sized cups of coffee -- or 400 mg of caffeine per day -- as generally safe.

However, drinking coffee can produce side effects like restlessness, a rapid heartbeat, and insomnia.

Drinking more than four cups of coffee per day can increase these adverse effects. Some people report having symptoms like heightened anxiety, headaches, and agitation. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), which is used to assess and diagnose mental disorders, calls it "coffee intoxication".

Because caffeine is a drug, people can develop a dependency. Trying to quit cold-turkey on your coffee consumption can produce symptoms like fatigue, pounding headaches, and a lack of mental clarity. That may offset the benefits of drinking coffee to help with depression.

The caffeine in coffee can interact negatively with medications taken to treat health issues like a thyroid disorder. It can also interact negatively with drugs prescribed for mental health issues. If you

have diabetes, excessive coffee consumption can increase your blood sugar levels and make it harder to manage your insulin.

Postmenopausal women who drink more than three cups of coffee per day may start losing bone in their spine because of a lack of calcium. Others who should exhibit caution regarding drinking coffee, even to help with depression, include those with acid reflux or high cholesterol.

Lifestyle Changes That Help With Depression

Drinking coffee in moderation can provide some help with symptoms of depression. Try putting off your first cup of coffee until you've been awake for at least an hour. That gives your body time to produce more of a natural energy booster called cortisol. It's better to put your coffee breaks off until you need them, like the middle of the morning or afternoon when your cortisol levels drop.

If you're not a regular coffee drinker, try

to reserve your coffee drinking for when your symptoms threaten to overwhelm you. Avoid drinking caffeine close to your bedtime so you're able to get a good night's sleep.

Eliminating sweet beverages from your diet can help with depression. You can still incorporate coffee into your diet by not adding sugar. People who drink unsweetened coffee have been shown to feel less depressed than those who don't drink coffee.

Another non-medical remedy you might want to try to help with depression is regular exercise. It helps elevate your mood and reduce the severity of your depression symptoms. You may find that you're able to wean yourself off relying on coffee because of the serotonin and endorphin boost you get from increased physical activity.

As always, your best bet is to speak with a doctor about your depression and talk with them about different treatment options.

WebMD

What to know about coffee and depression



● Postmenopausal women who drink more than three cups of coffee per day may start losing bone in their spine because of a lack of calcium. Others who should exhibit caution regarding drinking coffee, even to help with depression, include those with acid reflux or high cholesterol



Choose Local Foods

THE fewer steps between your table and the farm where your food grows, the fewer chances it has to get “dirty” with contaminants or processing.

It also means you’ll get fresher -- and more nutrient-dense -- fare, too.

Clean Your Skin Care Routine

Your skin provides a short route into your body. Skip products with fragrances, additives, or preservatives such as parabens. Ask your dermatologist or doctor about ingredients you don’t know on your lotions and makeup bottles, so you can make the cleanest choice possible.

Pack In the Plant-Based Foods

A clean eating diet starts with a focus on veggies, fruits, and whole grains. Round this out with healthy proteins such as low-fat dairy, lean meats, fish, beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

Look at Labels

Extras in your foods’ ingredients like dyes, preservatives, additives, added sugar, and sodium do little for your health. And in some cases, they may be harmful. Whole, unprocessed foods are safest. A good rule of thumb: The fewer ingredients, the cleaner.

Don’t Overheat Certain Oils

Oils with high levels of polyunsaturated fats, like corn, soybean, sunflower, and safflower oils, oxidize under high heat. That means they break down and release free radicals, charged molecules that can damage cells and lead to disease.

Check Your Cookware

Nonstick cookware may make cleanup after cooking easier, but it can come with a cost. Ongoing studies show that some kinds of polymer coating used in nonstick pans

Guide to cleaner living



can be mildly toxic when heated.

Be Picky About Packaging

BPA-free plastic is OK for storing food and drinks, but keep it cool. Never reheat leftovers in plastic. Your best bet for toxic-free, earth-friendly food storage is glass, ceramic, or stainless steel.

Head Off Hazardous Waste

Anytime you’re tossing old paint, solvents, outdated electronics, or any kind of trash that could be environmentally unhealthy, be smart about the sendoff. Read packaging carefully for disposal instructions. Check to see if there are special recycling centers in your area. Better yet, get creative about ways to avoid buying hazardous materials in the first place.

Green Your Cleaning

Even cleaners with a “green” or “natural” label can have no-good ingredients that can harm health. Do a cleaning supply inventory -- could you replace chemical cleaners with pantry staples like vinegar, baking soda, or good old warm water?

Be a Savvy Meat Shopper

Clean eating typically means dining on less red meat. If you do put meat on the menu, choose wisely. “Grass-fed” is good, but “grass-finished” is better -- it means the animal was fed grass their whole life. “Organic” means you’re avoiding hormones and antibiotics. And look for a third-party certification that your meat was raised humanely and organically. **WebMD**



Umhlanga Day 3 in pictures



▲ Indvuna yeMbali Bongiwe Vivane Hlatjwako posing with her Reed.



▲ HRH Princess Sakhizwe, Liphovela laZuma and other Princess.



▲ Tourists taking pictures with the Royalties.



▲ Imbali posing for a picture carrying their reed.



▲ HRH Princess Sakhizwe, Liphovelq and other Princesses ready to depart the farm with their reed



THE Department of Sport, Arts and Culture say there has been 'significant progress' in the implementation of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system in South African football.

The department say they have allocated R82 million of their budget "specifically for the VAR project".

McKenzie pushing for VAR

They say they have allocated this amount on the back of work done towards implementing VAR by the South African Football Association (SAFA).

It is SAFA who control refereeing in South Africa and not the Premier Soccer League (PSL).

Sports, Arts and Culture minister Gayton McKenzie has been pushing for VAR to be implemented for some time.

"The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) is pleased to announce significant progress in the procurement and implementation of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system for South African football, in close collaboration with the South African Football Association (SAFA) and the Premier Soccer League (PSL)," read a statement from the department on Thursday.

"This initiative aims to enhance the integrity, fairness, and overall quality of domestic competitions by addressing ongoing concerns over refereeing decisions that have led to fan dissatisfaction and which stand to impact South Africa's future standing among footballing nations if VAR is not adopted.

"Following SAFA's recent update on the project to the Department, the following key milestones have been achieved to date.

"These include the publication of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for VAR technology, the receipt of responses from potential providers, and alignment with FIFA's Implementation Assistance and Approval Programme (IAAP).

'Exemplary'

"SAFA's commitment to transparency,

Government allocate R82 million for VAR rollout

accountability, and adherence to FIFA's requirements has been exemplary, with a strong focus on appointing a dedicated VAR Project Team and re-engaging the PSL to ensure a collaborative rollout.

"To support this critical advancement, the Department has allocated R82 million from its current budget specifically for the VAR project.

"This funding will enable the swift development of a comprehensive project plan, training programmes for referees and officials, technology selection, stadium assessments, and the establishment of a VAR Training Centre.

"A portion of the budget will be dedicated to providing reliable connectivity at relevant stadiums, ensuring seamless integration of the VAR system while also enhancing overall stadium safety, for instance, by facilitating better communication in emergencies such as locating missing children.

"The Department urges all stakeholders to proceed with urgency to ensure this allocation is utilised effectively within the current financial year, paving the way for VAR's successful introduction in South African leagues."

There was no date mentioned, however, by the department when VAR will be used in PSL competitions.

SAFA's head of referees Abdul Ebrahim did tell kickoff.com in June that there may be limited VAR in the PSL cup competitions this season.

"The government has promised assistance, but we haven't heard anything from them, so everyone is still waiting for Min-



▲ Gayton McKenzie, Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, is behind the government's drive to have VAR implemented in South African football.

ister McKenzie and his department," said Ebrahim in June.

"The tender process has been completed"

"As far as refereeing is concerned, we are ready, but beyond that, there is nothing more we can add.

"The tender process has been completed, and the tender committee needs to be established to make a decision. They need to go through the tender process, and obviously,

they will select a service provider from there.

"It's possible for the PSL to have VAR next season, but only in certain matches; we will not be able to implement VAR in the league because a lot of training is still needed.

"There is possibility in cup games, yes, but not for the league."

Now that the government have stumped up the cash, VAR in South Africa does seem like only a matter of time. (Supersport)

Pirates legend says Ouaddou is 'not yet off the hook'

ORLANDO Pirates legend Jerry "Legs of Thunder" Sikhosana believes the Buccaneers have turned the corner after a poor start to the Betway Premiership campaign.

Pirates, who have finished second behind Mamelodi Sundowns for the past three consecutive seasons, started the 2025/26 season with back-to-back defeats before winning their last three consecutive matches before the FIFA international break.

Even though he acknowledges that the Buccaneers have turned the corner, Sikhosana warns that new coach Abdeslam Ouaddou is not off the hook yet. Ouaddou replaced Jose Riveiro as the new Pirates coach ahead of the new season.

"Yes, Orlando Pirates have turned things around, they are doing well compared to when they started the league," Sikhosana told Hollywoodbets Blog.

'Pirates are not consistent'

"They have now got three wins but for me the coach is not yet off the hook.

"I think he still needs to work hard for them to do well in the MTN8 and to reach the final mounts more pressure on Ouaddou to give them what they want. Because the most goal is for Orlando Pirates to win the league.

"So, I think that will be a big problem. Yes, they might be going well now, but I don't think everything will be smooth as it is supposed to be.

"Let's hope the coach will realise that but for me Pirates have not yet been the consistent Pirates that was under Jose Riveiro,"



▲ Abdeslam Ouaddou coach of Orlando Pirates.

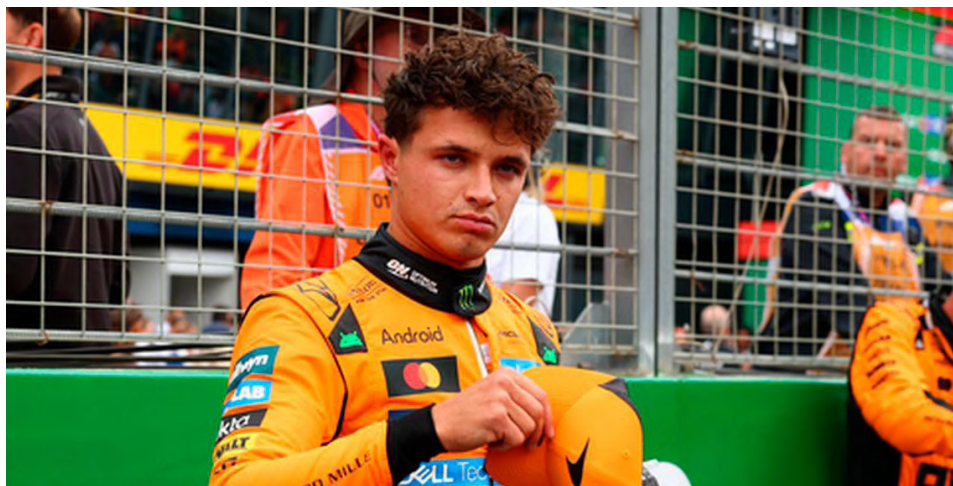
added the former Pirates striker.

Pirates will face Stellenbosch FC in the final of the MTN8 at Mbombela Stadium on Saturday, 13 August at 6pm. Tickets for this encounter are sold out.

Meanwhile, as previously reported Ouaddou and five other staff members were admitted to hospital after a road accident on Sunday.

According to the statement issued by the club, the incident occurred on the R21 highway as the team returned from Gqeberha, following their hard-fought 3-0 victory against Chippa United.

(Supersport)



▲ Lando Norris.

Stella looks forward to Norris showing fighting spirit

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

The Briton is now 34 points behind Australian teammate Oscar Piastri in their Formula One title battle with nine rounds remaining.

He said on Sunday that he would be going full-on to try and win every race.

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

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

Piastri has won seven of the 15 grands prix

so far in 2025 with Norris on five.

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

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

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

Stella said McLaren would remain neutral and continue to allow their drivers to race freely.

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

Car-crash season with Ferrari weighing on Hamilton

LEWIS Hamilton is in the midst of a crisis of confidence and results that the Formula One icon has never known in his storied career as Ferrari's fans hope for a sharp turnaround at the Italian Grand Prix.

Seven-time F1 champion Hamilton's arrival at Maranello made Ferrari's vociferous support dream of an end to an 18-year wait for a world title to be won by a driver in red.

Instead the 40-year-old trails championship leader Oscar Piastri by a whopping 200 points after a disastrous campaign with Ferrari which not only hasn't brought him any GP wins, but not even a single podium finish.

Last weekend's Dutch GP was the lowest point of the year for the Scuderia, with both Hamilton and Charles Leclerc crashing out of a race which had been preceded by the Briton twice spinning his car in practice.

Nonetheless Hamilton still appears to be happy to be with the sport's most famous team, telling Sky in Italy on Wednesday that it was "really special to remember that I'm a Ferrari driver" every time he comes to Italy.

Hamilton and Leclerc, who delighted fans by winning at Monza last year, were greeted enthusiastically by hordes of supporters at an event held in the shadow of Milan's famous Gothic cathedral.

"Yesterday was such a unique experience. Yesterday morning, I got to Maranello, and when you walk in and you see the Ferrari logo, I mean I still have to pinch myself," Hamilton told reporters on Thursday.



▲ Lewis Hamilton.

"There's clearly just so much love for this brand and for what it means to people. And to be in Milan, in the heart of it all yesterday and seeing the fans and just how passionate they were about it, it was intense, but very, very positive."

Hamilton has taken badly his failure to perform after switching to Ferrari following 12 years at Mercedes, referring to himself as "completely useless" at the Hungarian GP in an outburst which led to talk of him quitting the sport come the end of the year.

"It's been an emotional rollercoaster.

What can I say? Did I expect it to be as volatile in terms of the feeling? No. But that's life," he said.

"The sun may be coming out on the brighter end of the tunnel."

MCLAREN DOMINANCE

And his chances of making the Monza masses happy were further hit after the Dutch GP when he was handed a five-place grid penalty for this weekend after failing to slow down in a yellow flag zone on his way to the grid.

"There's not point whinging about it,"

added Hamilton.

"It's going to be a challenge this weekend in qualifying as it's already so close between us all. Just getting to Q3 is tough, getting in the top five is very, very tough."

Hamilton and Leclerc are in truth little more than a photogenic sideshow as McLaren duo Piastri and Lando Norris battle for a drivers' crown which would be the first for the British team since 2008, when Ferrari won their last constructors' title.

Piastri has 309 points from 15 GPs and leads his teammate by 34 after Norris failed to finish the race in Zandvoort after suffering a mechanical failure in the closing laps.

Between them Piastri and Norris have won all but three races this season at the wheel of McLaren cars which have blown away the competition.

Not even reigning champion Max Verstappen has had enough to challenge McLaren and a 104-point gap separating him from Piastri suggests that his run of F1 titles is set to end at four in a row.

Dutchman Verstappen managed to finish second in front of his home fans last weekend, pouncing on Norris' misfortune, but he is realistic about his chances of putting pressure on Piastri over the final nine races of the season.

The famously blunt 27-year-old has already said that his goal for the rest of the campaign is to "just try to make the best of it", starting at a circuit where he has won twice. (Supersport)

Boks rookie Ethan Hooker gets big Test chance against All Blacks

RISING Springbok talent Ethan Hooker will get a wonderful opportunity to show what he can do on one of the biggest stages in world rugby when he plays off the bench in the Rugby Championship clash against the All Blacks at Eden Park in Auckland on Saturday.

The 22-year-old Hooker has just one Bok cap to his name, when he replaced Canan Moodie at outside centre in the second half of the second Italian Test in Gqeberha in July.

It was thus a major surprise to see him named in the match 23 on Thursday for what is arguably the Boks' biggest game of the last two years, especially with a host of players, such as Damian Willemse, André Esterhuizen, Apehele Fassi and Manie Libbok available, among others.

Covering midfield

Hooker is a versatile player, and has featured at wing, centre and full-back for the Sharks, but Bok coach Rassie Erasmus explained that he would be focusing on just one role for this match, as they give him an opportunity to impress.

"With the way we have been building squad depth, a guy like Fassi has had a few starts now, Damian Willemse knows what he must work on as a 28-year-old who has won



▲ Springbok back Ethan Hooker in action during the second Test against Italy.

two World Cups, and we know we have him as a banker and when we will unleash him," said Erasmus on Thursday.

"We just felt with Willie (le Roux) helping Canan (on the wing), who didn't have a great game last time (against the Wallabies in Cape Town), having that calmer hand at the back helps a lot.

"We then have Sacha (Feinberg-Mngomezulu, on the bench) who covers 10, 12 and 15. So with Ethan, we didn't have a specialist centre on the bench, and he will only be covering that position for us."

Pace and physicality

Erasmus continued: "With the team we picked we felt that we

would have to match their (the All Blacks) pace, while also bringing the physicality, and we thought that they were going to go with a 5-3 (bench) split.

"We are trying to pick a team that we think can squeeze a win against the best team in the world currently, and sometimes we try to put in guys under real pressure for them to understand what it is like.

"So that when we press on their button a little bit later in the year against Ireland, France, and next year, they kind of get used to the environment with senior players around them."

(The Citizen)



▲ Kieffer Moore.

Wales edge Kazakhstan to boost World Cup hopes

KIEFFER Moore's goal gave Wales a 1-0 win away in Kazakhstan in World Cup qualifying on Thursday to hand Craig Bellamy's side a major boost in their attempt to make next year's tournament in North America.

The veteran Wrexham striker netted from close range midway through the first half in Astana and the visitors held on as a late Serikzhan Muzhikov free-kick for Kazakhstan clipped the crossbar.

Wales were beaten 4-3 away in Belgium in their last qualifier in June, but this victory leaves them provisionally top of

Group J with 10 points from five games.

However, North Macedonia are only two points behind in second with a game in hand, while group favourites Belgium have four points from only two outings.

Belgium will be expected to get all three points later when they face minnows Liechtenstein away.

Elsewhere on Thursday, European champions Spain begin their qualifying campaign away in Bulgaria, while Germany also play their first match away to Slovakia. The Netherlands entertain Poland in Rotterdam.

(The Citizen)

8BET TRADE FAIR CUP SEMI-FINALS PREVIEWS

It's down to 4 teams
... Only two can play that E0.63 million game on Sunday

By Chris Dlamini

JUST like the Aviator crashes in the 8Bet online sports betting platform, 12 elite teams, including the country's giants Mbabane Highlanders, Manzini Wanderers, Mbabane Swallows and Moneni Pirates - all massive crowd pullers.

With E630 000 (E0.630 million) at stake for the champions on Sunday when the final gets underway at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini, it is now only down to four teams. It's about last year's semi-finalists Nsingizini Hotspurs and their rivals in the semis, Manzini Sea Birds, as well as Green Mamba and minnows Ubombo Sugar FC on Friday, September 5.

Two of these will advance to fight for the E0.63 million grand prize. Who has better odds? Let's go through the fixtures...

Manzini Sea Birds vs. Nsingizini Hotspurs
Date: Friday, September 5, 2025
Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini
Kick-off: 7.30pm

The fixture is out, and it will go down between these two teams. One must proceed to the final, but who? Both have worked hard to be where they are.

The 8Bet Trade Fair Cup started on August 30 and comes to an end on Sunday, September 7, where one team will be crowned the second edition champions.

Looking at past meetings between these two exciting sides, with Sea Birds, the more dangerous judging by their last two displays, the more it will not be an easy match. In their last meeting, it was 1-0 in favour of Nsingizini Hotspurs at King Sobhuza II Stadium in Nhlengano.

This was in the league, with the first leg ending 3-1, also in favour of Nsingizini. Neither is in full strength as Izinyoni Zolwandle, as Sea Birds affectionately go, has four players, and Nsingizini has five, all away in Cameroon with the senior national team Sihlangu Semnikati.

They will only return after the Trade Fair Cup final as they will travel to Libya after Thursday's clash with the Indomitable Lions. However, Sea Birds still showed they were a united and strong team when they earned their revenge over Moneni Pirates in the quarter-finals on Wednesday, winning 2-1 after coming from behind.



▲ Nsingizini's Sambulo Simelane.

Insingizi, on the one hand, struggled against Malanti Chiefs, having to win 4-1 in the penalty shootout after a goalless draw. Perhaps their dominance over Sea Birds will be a point of inspiration while their new signing, Thando Langa from Mbabane Highlanders, will face his former teammates as well. He spent more years in Sea Birds than any other elite team.

He and his Insingizi Yezulu teammates will have to deal with the menacing Muzi Tsabedze and Mthokozisi Gwebu at the back. The two forwards are pacey with dribbling and a knack for goals all in them. A must-watch for the fans, a definite must-win for either club. Can Sea Birds avenge their two league defeats last season? Or will Insingizi Yezulu continue where they left off? Tickets cost E50 for the double-header semi-finals.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
Nsingizini Hotspurs
Thando Langa (Defensive Midfielder)
Sambulo 'Masoso' Simelane (Forward)
Sea Birds
Muzi Tsabedze (Wing forward)
Mthokozisi Gwebu (Forward)

HEAD-TO-HEAD 2024/25-23/24:
(26/04/25)
Ns. Hotspurs 1-1 Sea Birds
(09/11/24)
Sea Birds 1-3 Ns. Hotspurs
(04/02/24)
Sea Birds 0-1 Ns. Hotspurs
(24/09/23)
Ns. Hotspurs 1-1 Sea Birds



▲ Melusi Tfwala Ubombo sugar.



▲ Green Mamba players Njabulo Ndlovu , Siyabonga Bhembe and Banele Shongwe celebrating.

Green Mamba vs. Ubombo Sugar FC
Date: Friday, September 5, 2025
Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini
Kick-off: 5pm

Star-studded as they are, Green Mamba know already how tough this knockout has been and that big teams are out is testimony to that. The Correctional Services side boasts better quality than their smaller rivals in Ubombo Sugar FC, formerly Illovo.

The latter can not by any means be written off as much as many already are making that mistake by predicting Green Mamba will be in the final with either Nsingizini Hotspurs or Manzini Sea Birds. None can argue this with given the quality and international experience at Green Mamba who has every player available for selection.

This time, their stars like forward Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa and goalkeeper Xolani Gama were left behind. Gama and new signing got late callups but were still left behind for unclear reasons related to fitness. How-

ever, they both featured for their team in the last 16 and quarter-finals derby against Royal Leopard on Wednesday.

Above all this, Ubombo Sugar are not a walkover team, and they have this knack to trouble Green Mamba. The sugar belt outfit has already seen out of the knockout Sisonke and Ezulwini United. Upsets have been witnessed here, and they know they can add their own by eliminating Green Mamba.

They will look up to stars like Melusi 'Vardy' Thwala and Ngcebo Msibi to lead their fight to get to the final. If they do beat Inyoka Eluhlazana or Mabona Ahlonishwe as Green Mamba is fondly called, then it will be the sweetest revenge for Bafana Shukela (Ubombo Sugar) who bowed 3-1 in their last meeting in the league last season.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
Green Mamba
Lindani 'Rio' Matsenjwa (Midfielder)
Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa (Forward)



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs players celebrating after progressing to the last four.



▲ Manzini Sea Birds players celebrating.

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela

Green Lightning, Royal Flames dominate Men’s national team

SWAZILAND Building Society (SBS) Netball League giants Green Lightning and Royal Flames are dominating the Eswatini Men’s National Netball Team that will take on Zimbabwe in the three-day international tour.

The invitational friendly matches will take place at Mavuso Sports Centre starting from September 5-7,2025.

The Green Lightning stars include Fortune Nerves, Thembeke Dlamini, Sakhile Maseko, among others.

Seasoned Royal Flames players such as Brendan Dlamini,Machawe Malindzisa and Sithabiso Mzileni are part of the national side led by Vimbubukhosi Ndlangamandla.

Ndlangamandla has replaced Themba Si-fundza, who led the team during the 2024 African continental cup, which was held in Namibia.

Eswatini National Netball Association (ENNA) Secretary Nkhabindze Shabalala confirmed the squad when reached for comment.

“We are pleased to announce the selection of the Men’s National Netball Team for the upcoming 3-day test series against Zimbabwe. We congratulate the following players who have been chosen to represent Eswatini with pride and commitment,” he said.

He further wished the technical team the best of luck during the assignment.

“We extend our best wishes to the players and technical team as they prepare to compete in this important series, which serves as

a key step towards our participation in the Netball World Cup. Together, let us support and rally behind our men’s netball team as they strive to achieve excellence on the international stage,” he said

The series will help the senior mens national team prepare for the 2025 African cup scheduled for Malawi in December.

The full list

Green Lightning:

Fortune Neves, Sakhile Maseko, Nduku Masangane, Siphiwo Dlamini, Thembeke Dlamini, Mandisa Sihlongonyane, Simanga Vilakati, Melusi Vilane

Royal Flames:

Brendan Dlamini, Machawe Malindzisa, Sizolwethu Magagula, Simphiwe Dlamini, St-habiso

Mzileni, Zweli Mbatha, Mpile Masilela

Vixens

Mpendulo Mncina, Thembinkosi Matsebula, Sebenele Maweela, Sibusiso Shongwe

Buffaloes:

Thabo Maphosa, Duma Maziya, Zweli Ndzi-mandze

The technical team

Head Coach: Vimbubukhosi Ndlangamandla

Assistant Coach: Wandile Sithole

Team Manager: Nhlanhla Ngcamphalala

Team Doctor: Bongani Magagula.



▲The men’s netball national team.

MTN Khemani registration deadline on September 20

REGISTRATION for the 2025 MTN Khemani Road Classic will close on September 20, 2025.

This will be seven days before the flagship race scheduled for Mankanyane.

This is according to an update released by the host club, MTN Khemani Cycling Club.

The road race is sponsored to the tune of E350 000 by MTN Eswatini.

The race will have four categories: 100km, 60km, 30km, and 5km.

Registration details for the 100km, 60km, and 30km categories are available at E200.

Eswatini Cycling Association (ECA) president William Kelly said they are happy with the return of the race.

“We are grateful for the support of the sponsor towards the race and look forward to a successful, exciting competition. We further appreciate the support of the Government through the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism,” he said.

The race will be attended by international and local riders.

The riders will be coming from South Africa, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Namibia on September 27, 2025, in Mankayane.

Several local clubs, such as Newcomm Wheels, Kusekhaya, Team G, and Darkton Cycling Club, among others, will also attend the prestigious race.



▲The cricket national team.

ECA names Moza friendly squad

THE Eswatini Cricket Association has named a 16-member squad to represent the country in the international friendly match against Mozambique.

The matches will take place at Malkerns country club between September 12-14,2025.

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

The players include Mancoba Jele, Melusi Magagula, Rashid Harries, Qasim Umair and Banele Mngometulu , among others.

ECA Secretary Mandla Dlamini confirmed the squad when reached for comment.

“We are confirmed that the team will do well in the competition and wish the team the best of luck during the games,” he said.

Dlamini further stated that the upcoming match will give exposure to local players

“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,” he said.

The full squad

1. Magagula Melusi
2. Jele Mancoba
3. Jele Veli
4. Banele Mngomezulu
5. Phiri Eric
6. Ginindza Vamumusa
7. Dlamini Loyiso
8. Kubheka Siphesihle
9. Rashid Haris
10. Sandeep Rohan
11. Butt Adil
12. Qasim Umair
13. Kulfiwala Minhaj
14. Alamgir Mohammed
15. Hasan Kamrul
16. Jangariya Hejeifa



▲ 2025 MTN Khemani Road Classic will close on September 20, 2025.

King's Golf Cup back with a bang

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

BIGGER and better.
THE King's Golf Cup is back with a bang. The champion of the prestigious golf tournament will take home E240 000 bounty between September 10-14, 2025, at Ezulwini Golf Club.

The details of the competition were unpacked during a breakfast meeting held on Thursday at the Hilton Garden Inn.

The tournament will kick-off this weekend with a pre-qualifier that will feature local golfers worth E135 000.

The dinner will also take place on September 12, 2025, possibly at Lozitha Palace.

The tournament organiser, Vusi Dlamini, confirmed the first prize money.

"We are happy with the return of the tournament and golfers stand an opportunity to win a lucrative prize money, which has been increased," he said.

Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs Jane Mkhonta appreciated the support of the sponsors towards the tournament.

"We are pleased that the tournament will once again take place this year and grate-



▲ The champion of the prestigious golf tournament will take home E240 000 bounty between September 10-14, 2025, at Ezulwini Golf Club.

ful for the support of local companies. The tournament helps to create job opportunities and promotes sports tourism," she said.

Some of the sponsors that attended the breakfast meeting include Eswatini Royal

Insurance Corporation, Eswatini Electricity Company, Ubombo Sugar, and Eswatini Railway, among others.

South African golfer Keenan Davids is the defending champion of the tournament.



▲ The tournament will kick-off this weekend with a pre-qualifier that will feature local golfers worth E135 000.

Siboza to be buried in South Africa

By Sibusiso Masilela
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THE late football administrator Johannes 'Ace' Sibozza will be laid to rest on Sunday in Hazyview, Mpumalanga province.

The former Manzini Regional Football Association Chairman lost his life on Monday after a battle with an undisclosed illness.

The ex-Mbabane Highlanders player also chaired the regional football body between 2018-2022.

He also served as Eswatini Football Association executive committee during the era of the longest serving President Adam 'Bomber' Mthethwa.

Sibozza's son Similo confirmed the latest developments when reached for comment.

"The Funeral will be held on Saturday after a memorial service that will take place on Saturday at Mfanyana Hall, Manzini," he said.

The Eswatini Football Association mourned the demise of the seasoned football administrator.

"The Eswatini Football Association (EFA) and the entire football community in Eswatini are deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Mr. Johannes 'Ace' Sibozza. A dedicated football administrator and player, Mr. Sibozza made significant contributions to the sport throughout his career," EFA said in a statement.

The organisation further revealed that the late Sibozza played a huge role in developing football locally and regionally.

"He served as a member of the EFA Executive Committee, Chairperson of the Manzini Regional Football Association (MRFA), Secretary of the MRFA, and was involved in various committees within the EFA. Additionally, he served on the Competitions Committee of the Council of Southern African Football Associations (COSAFA). As a player, he represented the Senior Men's



▲ The late football administrator Johannes 'Ace' Sibozza will be laid to rest on Sunday in Hazyview, Mpumalanga province.

National Team (Sihlangu SeMnikati) and played for several clubs, including Mbabane Highlanders F.C. and Mbabane Dribbling Wizards F.C. The loss of Mr. Johannes 'Ace' Sibozza is profoundly felt within the football federation. His passion for the game, both as an administrator and a player, was unmatched, demonstrating his commitment to the beautiful game. His extensive experience and knowledge in football administration and development will be sorely missed," the mother body said.

He also served in various football portfolios, including working as Ingwenyama Cup Management Committee Chairman, among others.

He is the third member of the local football fraternity to pass on in the last three weeks after two Manzini Wanderers legends, Adam 'Ankel' Dlamini and David 'Botsotso' Manyatsi.

'Birds' Sindiso leads U17s to tough AFCON

By Chris Dlamini

THE Eswatini national under-17 men's squad is off to Zimbabwe this weekend. Gama has been preparing the youngsters at the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) Technical Centre in Lobamba in the last few weeks ahead of the trip this weekend.

"As the kick-off for the TotalEnergies U17 AFCON/COSAFA Qualifiers draws nearer, the U17 Men's National Team is finalising its preparations. This tournament is scheduled for Harare, Zimbabwe as from the 11th -20th September 11-20, 2025.

"The national team is scheduled to leave this weekend," affirmed EFA Communications and Marketing Officer Muzi Radebe.

Eswatini is in Group A together with the hosts Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Comoros.

"Sindiso Gama is the head coach. As part of the preparations, the national team, which is currently in a full-time camp, had friendly matches last week against Lesotho,



▲ Mbabane Swallows assistant coach Sindiso Gama is to take charge of the National U17. where we lost by 1-0 margins," said Radebe.

He said preparations had been going positively and the defeats to Lesotho was a wake-up call to what they had to fix before leaving.

Eswatini National Under-17 Men's Tentative Squad:

GOALKEEPERS

1. Lindani Dlamini (Green Mamba F.C.)
2. Luyanda Ndlovu (Home Affairs F.C.)

DEFENDERS

3. Lindani Dlamini (Green Mamba F.C.)
4. Muhle Maseko (Smart Trick F.C.)
5. Lwandzile Ndzimandze (RESA Academy-RSA)
6. Nkosenhle Tsela (Uche F.C.)
7. Sibahle Vilakati (School

of Excellency Academy)

MIDFIELDERS

8. Yakhani Magagula (Pigg's Peak Professionals F.C.)
9. Sibahle Nonjola (Mbabane Swallows F.C.)
10. Siviwe Madzinane (Moneni Pirates F.C.)
11. Sanelo Vilakati (Mbabane Swallows F.C.)
12. Alwande Mkhonta (Liwakawaka F.C.)
13. Mazwamahle Vilakati (Royal Leopard F.C.)
14. Khulekani Maziya

(Nsingizini Hotspurs F.C.)

15. Gibhitha Jele (Bhawini F.C.)
16. Samkeliso Dube (Tuks Academy-RSA)

STRIKERS

17. Lindani Mngomezulu (Tiki Taka F.C.)
18. Abelwe Mabuza (Moneni Pirates F.C.)
19. Luyanda Mathe (Mashekesheni F.C.)
20. Mazwamahle Vilakati (Royal Leopard F.C.)
21. Samkeliso Dube (Tuks Academy - RSA).

**SA Govt
allocate R82m
for VAR rollout**

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**Siboza to be
buried in
South Africa**

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Daily News

Sport



King's Golf Cup back with a bang



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