

By Kwanele Dhladhla

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■ **SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2**



ENPF declares record 10% members' interest, posts E631.2mln surplus

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▲ENPF Board and Management pose for a picture after the Fund's results were announced during a press briefing at Summerfileld Bonatival Gardens on Monday.



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King calls for peaceful, credible elections in Malawi

By Kwanele Dhladhla

HIS Majesty King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Eswatini, who is also the Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, has called upon Malawians to uphold peace, unity, and democratic principles as they head to the polls.

On Tuesday, September 16, Malawians will vote to elect a President, Members of Parliament, and Councillors in line with their Constitution and electoral laws. His Majesty expressed confidence that Malawi, long admired for its tradition of peace and stability, will once again demonstrate its commitment to democracy.

“Malawi has a long-standing tradition of peace and stability. I am confident that during and in the aftermath of these elections, Malawi will maintain its reputation as a peaceful nation that upholds democratic principles and conducts peaceful elections,” King Mswati III said.

At the invitation of the Government of



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III.

Malawi, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has deployed an Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to oversee the process. The mission is being led by Shiselweni Regional Administrator and former Deputy Prime Minister Themba Masuku. It will cover the pre-election period, polling day, and post-election activities,

in line with the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021).

These principles, adopted by all SADC Member States, promote regular, free, fair, transparent, credible, and peaceful elections as the cornerstone of democracy and good governance in the region.

His Majesty urged Malawians to take part in shaping their future through active participation. “I call upon all Malawians who are eligible to vote to do so in large numbers, exercising their democratic right and contributing to the development and prosperity of their country,” he said.

He further appealed to political leaders and their supporters to respect the will of the people and conduct themselves responsibly. “I urge all political leaders and their supporters to respect the will of the people, and to act responsibly through the legal means provided by the laws of Malawi,” he stressed.

Reaffirming SADC’s support, King Mswati III said the SEOM’s mission was to facilitate a peaceful, credible, and inclusive electoral process. “Through the SEOM, SADC’s mission remains to facilitate a peaceful, credible, and inclusive electoral process,” he said.

In his closing remarks, His Majesty extended goodwill from the SADC community, “I join the people of the SADC region in wishing all Malawians a successful and peaceful election. May these elections strengthen Malawi’s democracy, foster national unity, and chart the path for Malawi’s prosperity.”

By Kwanele Dhladhla

THE Eswatini National Provident Fund (ENPF), widely known as Lidlelantfongeni, has reaffirmed its reputation as a pillar of financial stability and ethical stewardship after declaring a record 10 per cent members’ interest for the financial year ended June 30, 2025.

The landmark announcement was made on Monday by ENPF Chairman of the Board, Mduduzi Gina, during a press conference at Summerfield Botanical Gardens in Nokwane. The declaration was attended by board members E. Nathi Dlamini, Khanyisile Dube-Dlamini, Tum Du Pont, Thuli Mdluli, Dudu Ndzinisa, Maureen Nkambule, and ENPF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Futhi Tembe.

“We are here to formally declare a matter of great significance that reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical governance,” Gina told the gathering. “As stewards of this Fund, we recognise the importance of maintaining the public’s trust, and it is our duty to ensure that our stakeholders’ interests are safeguarded.”

According to Gina, the Fund’s audited financial statements revealed an operating surplus of E631.2 million for 2025, a remarkable improvement compared to E532.4 million in 2024 and E446.4 million in 2023. “This trajectory of consistent growth speaks volumes about the soundness of our investment strategy and disciplined financial management,” he said.

At the core of this performance is the Fund’s expanding revenue base, which grew to E782.7 million in 2025, up from E682.7 million in 2024 and E595.3 million in 2023. Gina highlighted that cost-conscious operations ensured maximum value for members.

“Our mandate under the SNPF Order is to declare not less than three per cent mem-

bers’ interest. Today, we proudly declare 10 per cent—well beyond the statutory minimum,” Gina announced.

The 10 per cent payout is the highest in recent years, representing a 14 per cent rise from last year’s 8.65 per cent and far above the 6.5 per cent declared in 2023.

“This milestone proves that it makes financial sense to keep savings within Lidlelantfongeni, as our returns are consistently higher than most alternative investment vehicles,” Gina said.

The ENPF Chairman credited the Fund’s success to strategic leadership and the dedication of its management team. He also extended appreciation to Minister of Labour and Social Security, Phila Buthelezi, for his unwavering support.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Futhi Tembe, expanded on the Fund’s winning formula, pointing to solid gains across both local and international markets. “The impressive results were driven by positive stock market performance and excellent returns from strategic investments such as the Industrial Development Corporation of Eswatini (IDCE) and Happy Valley Hotel,” Tembe explained.

She also highlighted the fund’s property portfolio, which performed exceptionally during the year under review. “Our diversification strategy is paying dividends. The property sector continues to deliver reliable growth, enhancing overall returns for our members,” she said.

Board Member E. Nathi Dlamini echoed the Chairman’s sentiments, praising management for their diligence and competence. “These results are extraordinary. They prove that the ENPF remains in safe and capable hands,” he said.

For thousands of workers across Eswatini,

ENPF declares record 10% members’ interest, posts E631.2mln surplus



▲ ENPF Board Chairman Mduduzi Gina delivering the Fund’s financial results while CEO Futhi Tembe looks on.

the declaration of a 10 per cent members’ interest represents more than just numbers. It is a powerful endorsement of the ENPF’s role as a guardian of their future savings.

“The ENPF belongs to the people. Our job is to ensure that it remains strong, resilient, and aligned with members’ needs. Today’s declaration is not just about financial performance; it is about leaving a legacy of trust, stability, and growth,” Gina reiterated.

Employers support ENPF conversion

Beyond the financial results, employers have also voiced their support for the proposed conversion of the ENPF into a universal national pension scheme.

Business Eswatini CEO, E. Nathi Dlamini, said the private sector has always endorsed the idea as a vital component of social protection. “From the very beginning, the concept of a national pension fund was supported in principle. The key now lies in agreeing on logistics and financial mechanics to en-

sure long-term viability,” he said.

Federation of Eswatini Business Community (FESBC) representative, Tum Du Pont, welcomed the move, emphasising its importance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs). “Many SMMEs lack pension schemes for employees. This conversion brings dignity and hope to workers who would otherwise retire without security,” Du Pont said.

The ENPF’s record-breaking 10 per cent payout has set a new benchmark for pension fund governance in the region. By balancing prudent financial discipline with forward-looking investments, the Fund continues to prove that growth and accountability can go hand in hand.

As Gina concluded, “This is not just about today’s numbers. It is about securing tomorrow. We promise to keep building a Fund that Emaswati can trust—for themselves, their families, and future generations.”



▲ Prince Mcwasho and the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo during the Jonsson Workwear Factory tour in Magidaneni Farm under Maseyisini.



Minister, Prince Mcwasho tour E185 mln Jonsson Workwear Factory

Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, yesterday toured the construction site of the Jonsson Workwear factory in Magidaneni Farm under Maseyisini Inkhundla to monitor progress on the multimillion Emalangeneni investment.

He was joined by Prince Mcwasho, Head of Operations at Construction Associates, the company that awarded the factory shell construction contract.

The contract was valued at E185,810,580, making it one of the largest industrial construction projects currently underway in

Eswatini.

The site visit was led by Merica Vilakati, Managing Director of Construction Associates, who presented a detailed progress report. Vilakati confirmed that the project is progressing according to schedule and in line with the planned specifications.

Minister Khumalo said the government welcomed the investment by Jonsson Workwear, highlighting its potential to drive job creation, industrial growth, and economic diversification.

“This project represents more than infrastructure it reflects investor confidence in Eswatini and will create significant employment opportunities while boosting the country’s manufacturing sector,” Khumalo stated during the tour.

Prince Mcwasho also reaffirmed Construction Associates’ commitment to delivering the project to the highest standards and within the set timeframe.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade emphasised that investments such as the Jonsson Workwear facility align with the government’s strategy to expand the industrial base, attract foreign direct investment, and strengthen Eswatini’s competitiveness in the regional market.

Once completed, the factory will serve as a major production hub for Jonsson Workwear, supporting both local and export markets.

It is also expected to provide hundreds of jobs for Swatis and stimulate downstream economic activities in Matsapha and beyond.

... Factory to create over 3 000 Jobs in Nhlangano

JONSSON Workwear’s new factory in the Jabulani area, just outside Nhlangano, is set to employ more than 3,000 people once fully operational.

Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo announced the employment figures during the factory site handover at Magidaneni Farm under Maseyisini Inkhundla.

The project will also hire over 200 people during the construction phase. This was announced in July this year.

Khumalo highlighted that the factory forms part of a decentralised development model aimed at creating jobs outside the traditional industrial hubs of Matsapha and Manzini.

The move is expected to boost local business opportunities in retail, agriculture, transport, and housing, while reducing youth migration from Nhlangano to larger towns.

The main contractor, Construction Associates, will complete a 20,000 square metre factory shell along with auxiliary buildings in 12 months.

The initiative is seen as a step toward improving the livelihoods of Emaswati and strengthening the town’s urban development.

New Toll fees take effect on October 1st

By Delisa Magagula

MOTORISTS entering Eswatini will begin paying revised toll fees at all border entry points starting October 1, 2025, following a government review under the Finance (Amendment) Act of 2025.

The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and the Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS), confirmed that tolls for vehicles entering from neighbouring states have been adjusted.

The new charges range from E55 for locally registered light vehicles to E450 for large foreign trucks, with additional rates pegged at USD 100 per heavy vehicle at Mhlumeni and Lomahasha borders.

The announcement has generated widespread interest, with cross-border transport operators and local motorists eager to understand the impact on trade, travel, and consumer prices.

When reached for comment, Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg acknowledged the high volume of inquiries sparked by the new toll structure.

“We are aware of the concerns being raised. I will be addressing the matter in full detail through a video statement tomorrow,” he said.

However, questions remain over the scale



▲ There are new toll fees for Eswatini taking effect on October 1, 2025

and purpose of the tolls. The Eswatini Daily News (EDN) sought clarification from the minister on several key issues, including:

- ▶ How much annual revenue is the government projecting from the tolls?
- ▶ Will the money specifically fund road maintenance or go into the general budget?
- ▶ Were transport associations, trucking companies, and commuters consulted?
- ▶ Which roads or ports are most affected by the new fees?

▶ How will government ensure the funds translate into better road infrastructure?

While Rijkenberg did not immediately provide detailed responses, his upcoming statement is expected to address these critical questions.

According to the official notice, foreign-registered vehicles entering Eswatini through borders shared with South Africa will pay as follows:

- ▶ Motorcycles: E80

- ▶ Light motor vehicles: E150
- ▶ Heavy motor vehicles (2 axles, 3,500kg–7,500kg): E350
- ▶ Heavy motor vehicles (3 axles, above 7,500kg): E400
- ▶ Heavy motor vehicles (4 axles and above, over 7,500kg): E450

At the Mhlumeni and Lomahasha borders, heavy vehicles will be subject to a USD 100 per truck fee.

Locally registered vehicles will pay lower rates, ranging from E55 for light vehicles to E100 for heavy trucks with four axles and above.

Cross-border bus and freight operators expressed concern that the changes could increase operational costs.

“Any adjustment at the border affects fares and prices. We are waiting to hear if the government has mitigation plans,” said one operator, who asked not to be named.

Analysts noted that while Eswatini’s tolls are being benchmarked against regional standards, implementation details will determine whether the move eases or adds to the cost of doing business in the country.

The Eswatini Revenue Service has urged motorists and transport operators to take note of the new charges when planning cross-border travel.

Payments will be collected directly at the border, with ERS promising strict compliance measures.

Rijkenberg is expected to outline the government’s revenue projections and confirm whether the tolls will be ring-fenced for road infrastructure when he issues his video statement on Tuesday.

By Thokozani Mazibuko

His Majesty King Mswati III has officially commissioned the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) recruitment drive, a national exercise that is set to open new doors for young Emaswati seeking to serve the country in uniform.

The announcement was delivered on Monday afternoon at Army Headquarters in Nokwane by Second Lieutenant Hashukile Motsa, who revealed that the exercise will commence this Saturday at Mafutseni Inkhundla, one of the strategic venues chosen for the nationwide drive.

According to Motsa, the recruitment campaign reflects the King's vision of building a strong, disciplined and professional military capable of safeguarding the sovereignty of Eswatini while providing meaningful opportunities to the youth.

"The recruitment drive is a call to the young men and women of Eswatini to step forward and serve their nation with honour and loyalty. It is also a chance to empower the youth through skills training, discipline, and employment in the country's defence structures," Motsa stated.

Strengthening national security
The UEDF plays a crucial role in protecting the territorial integrity of Eswatini, assisting in disaster management, and supporting peace and security both locally and in international missions. Officials say the current recruitment is part of broader efforts to modernise and strengthen the defence force to meet emerging security challenges.

It is worth mentioning that the exercise also comes at a time when the government is seeking to address youth unemployment, with the military offering structured career paths, training in various trades, and opportunities for leadership development.

What to expect
The recruitment process, set to roll out

King Commissions defence force recruitment drive



▲ Previous Army recruitment training in Eswatini.

in several phases across the country, is expected to attract thousands of young hopefuls. Applicants will undergo rigorous physical fitness tests, medical examinations, and background checks to ensure that only the most capable and disciplined individuals are selected.

While no official figures have been disclosed on the intake size, sources within the UEDF suggest that the drive will be competitive, underscoring the importance of preparation and readiness among prospective recruits.

Second Lieutenant Motsa emphasised that the UEDF is not merely a career option but also a calling to national service. "Those who will be selected will not only gain em-

ployment but will also earn the honour of being entrusted with the safety and future of the Kingdom. This is why the process is thorough and only the best candidates will be considered," he said.

With the recruitment officially commissioned by His Majesty, the exercise is expected to run in the coming weeks, covering various regions to ensure accessibility for aspiring candidates across the Kingdom.

It is worth mentioning that for many young Emaswati, this marks more than a job opportunity it represents a chance to contribute directly to the security and stability of their homeland, while embracing a life of discipline and service under the nation's flag.



▲ The King commissioned the recruitment process at the UEDF at the Army headquarters in Nokwane on Monday through Second Lieutenant Hashukile Motsa.

By Kwanele Dhladhla

THE National Maize Corporation (NMC) has incurred a staggering financial loss of E6,175,000.00, following what the Auditor General (AG) has described as a breach of contract compounded by inadequate legal guidance. The revelation was made by Auditor General Timothy Matsebula in the Audit Compliance Report, which was tabled in Parliament by the Minister of Finance, Neal Rijkeberg.

The report paints a troubling picture of lapses in governance and accountability within the state-owned enterprise.

According to the AG, the root cause dates to 2017, when NMC failed to adhere to contract terms, ultimately triggering costly legal claims. The prolonged litigation and eventual settlement drained millions from the Corporation's coffers-expenditure the AG labelled fruitless and wasteful.

"This financial loss could have been avoided through proper contract management and strict adherence to agreed terms," Matsebula noted, stressing that poor oversight had left the entity exposed.

The report also highlights ongoing legal challenges facing NMC, including an E863,718.00 claim from its former Chief Financial Officer (CFO) over the non-renewal of her employment contract. The AG explained that delays in responding to renewal notices, coupled with administrative lapses, led to the dispute, which remains un-

NMC hit by E6.1 million loss over contract breach

resolved in court.

The pending litigation not only carries the risk of further financial strain but also threatens NMC's reputation.

"The prolonged dispute has reputational risks, potentially affecting stakeholder confidence and future partnerships," the AG warned.

The audit findings underscore a pattern of weaknesses in governance within public enterprises, many of which continue to face challenges linked to poor contract management, weak controls, and inadequate legal oversight.

To prevent similar cases in future, the AG recommended that public enterprises strengthen their monitoring, reporting, and approval systems. "Entities must regularly identify, evaluate, and address risks that could result in financial losses or inefficiencies," he advised.

The NMC case is expected to reignite debate around the effectiveness of state-owned enterprises in managing public resources. Lawmakers are now under pressure to ensure greater accountability, especially in critical institutions tasked with safeguarding the country's food security.

As the litigation continues, the Corporation faces mounting scrutiny over its governance practices, with stakeholders demanding reforms to restore credibility and protect public funds.



▲ Auditor General Timothy Matsebula.

9-year-old girl electrocuted

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

A tragic accident has struck the community of Mpholonjeni in Siteki after a 9-year-old girl was fatally electrocuted by a fallen live wire on Sunday evening.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Police Information and Communication Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, the incident occurred on 14 September 2025 at around 7:00 p.m. when the minor was playing outside her home at Mncitsini, Mpholonjeni.

“The girl came into contact with a faulty live wire that had fallen to the ground. She was rushed to Good Shepherd Hospital where she was unfortunately certified dead upon arrival,” Vilakati confirmed.

Two other children who were with the deceased at the time of the incident also sustained injuries. They include a 19-year-old girl and a 14-month-old baby girl. Both



▲ Chief Police Information and Communication Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati.

are currently admitted at Good Shepherd Hospital and receiving medical attention.

The tragedy has sent shockwaves through the small community, with

residents expressing concern about the dangers posed by neglected or faulty electrical infrastructure.

“This is a painful and preventable loss. Authorities must act quickly to ensure that such live wires are repaired before more lives are lost,” said one community elder who asked not to be named.

The police have since urged members of the public to exercise extreme caution whenever they spot damaged electrical lines or fallen wires, and to immediately report such hazards to the Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) and community leaders.

It should be noted that electrocution incidents are not uncommon in rural and peri-urban communities across the country, where aging or poorly maintained power lines often pose risks to residents. Safety experts stress that children, in particular, are vulnerable to such dangers when playing outdoors.

Meanwhile, police say investigations into the incident are ongoing.

Man dies after eating ‘incwancwa’

By Delisa Magagula

SIDLO sekugcina!

This was quite literal for a 34-year-old man from Dlangeni, identified as Nhlanhla Lucky Dlamini, who died after allegedly consuming poisoned sour porridge (incwancwa).

According to sources close to the family, Dlamini had been working in the fields last Wednesday when he requested a young girl to fetch his food from home. Shortly after eating the sour porridge, he reportedly collapsed, with foam coming out of his mouth.

He was rushed to the Mbabane Government Hospital but, due to the unavailability of a poison-draining machine, he was later transferred to Raleigh Fitkin Memorial (RFM) Hospital.

machine, he was later transferred to Raleigh Fitkin Memorial (RFM) Hospital. Despite efforts to save his life, Dlamini passed away three days later while undergoing treatment.

Family members and community sources have suggested foul play, pointing fingers at one of Dlamini’s siblings.

The two were allegedly not on good terms, and suspicion reportedly grew after the sibling, who was at home when the meal was prepared, allegedly gave ‘suspicious responses’ when questioned about the incident.

One source claimed the sibling may have deliberately poisoned the food before it was taken to Dlamini in the fields.

“When neighbours asked Dlamini’s sibling about what had happened, his answers raised

suspensions,” said the source.

It is further alleged that when the family indicated that the matter would be reported to the police, the sibling fled the homestead. His whereabouts remain unknown.

A close relative, speaking to Eswatini TV News, confirmed Dlamini’s death after eating the porridge but said the matter was now with the police and they could not comment further.

Chief Police Information and Communications Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, confirmed the incident. She stated that investigations were ongoing. The incident has left the Dlangeni community in shock, with many residents unsettled by the possibility of poisoning within the homestead.

Woman hospitalised after suspected poisoning

In a separate incident, a woman from Ezulwini Buka is currently admitted at the Mbabane Government Hospital after reportedly ingesting a suspected poisonous substance.

The woman is said to have had an altercation with her partner before she disappeared and switched off her phone.

Later that day, while in her room, she was heard grunting by

her younger sister, who quickly sought help from neighbours.

With their assistance, the woman was rushed to hospital, where she is receiving medical care. Police have since been alerted about the matter.

Chief Police Information and Communications Officer, Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati, confirmed the incident and said investigations were underway.

E5 000 fine for drink driving accused

Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

A motorist who occupied both lanes of the road while driving his motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol was arrested and charged with drink-driving.

This has seen Zwelakhe Fakudze (33) of Mbikwakhe area, appearing before Principal Magistrates Florence Msibi at the Manzini Magistrates Court on Monday, charged with contravening the Road Traffic Act 6 of 2007.

He committed the offence on September 14, 2025 at Mathangeni area along M 3 public road while driving a Honda GRV Station Wagon registered QSD 863 AS.

According to the charge sheet, Fakudze unlawfully drove the aforesaid motor vehicle on the said public road while under the influence of intoxicating

liquor or narcotic drugs with a breath specimen reading of 1.59 milligrams per litre (mg/l), which was above the legal limit of 0.37 mg/l.

The particulars of his drink-driving were that he drove the motor vehicle and occupied both lanes of the road. He also had a strong smell of liquor emanating from his breath and was staggering in a manner that he could not stand firm on the ground.

He pleaded guilty to the offence and was found guilty as per his own plea.

He mitigated for a lenient sentence on grounds that he was propelled by an emergency to drive his car on both lanes of the road.

He further mentioned that he will never commit an offence of that nature again.

Fakudze was sentenced to four years in prison with an option of a fine of E5 000.

Four years in prison for drink driving and negligent driving

A motorist who was driving his car under the influence of alcohol was arrested after he lost control of the car, resulting in it veering off the road and landing into a roadside drainage.

This has resulted in Themba Shongwe (37) of Mankayane area being charged with two counts of contravening the Road Traffic Act 6 of 2007.

He committed both the offences on September 12, 2025 at New Village area along MR 9 public road while driving a VW Golf sedan registered HSD 293 CM.

On the first count, he was charged with drink-driving after driving the aforesaid motor vehicle while under the

influence of alcohol with a breath specimen reading of 1.16 mg/l, while on the second count, he is said to have negligently driven the said motor vehicle, which landed into a drainage after losing control of the car.

He pleaded guilty to both counts and was found guilty as per his own plea.

He mitigated for a lenient sentence on grounds that he was disturbed by another motorist who was trying to overtake his car, thus he ended up losing control of the motor vehicle.

He was sentenced to four years in prison on the first count with an option of a fine of E5 000, while on the second count, he was sentenced to six months imprisonment with an option of a fine of E800.



▲ He was rushed to the Mbabane Government Hospital but, due to the unavailability of a poison-draining machine, he was later transferred to Raleigh Fitkin Memorial (RFM) Hospital.



Stories by Delisa Magagula

IN a significant step towards strengthening economic ties between Southern and West Africa, Business Eswatini (BE) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Benin (CCIB) officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 11 September 2025.

The virtual signing ceremony marks a pivotal commitment to foster trade, investment, and mutual prosperity between the two nations, a vision driven by the steadfast belief and efforts of the BE leadership.

The event, hosted from the BE War Room by the BE Secretariat led by Chief Executive Officer, E. Nathi Dlamini, connected virtually with the delegation from Benin.

The CCIB was represented by its President, the Secretary General, and several collaborators. Adding a distinguished diplomatic presence to the occasion was the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Benin to the Kingdom of Eswatini, Pierre Bidé, who attended in person.

The MoU establishes a formal framework for cooperation, paving the way for robust trade and investment relations between Eswatini and Benin. The ceremony was underscored by a shared vision to prioritise intra-African cooperation and continental trade, in line with the aspirations of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In his remarks, Pierre Bidé highlighted the occasion as an important milestone for cooperation in various fields. He described Benin as one of the strongest growing economies in Africa and pointed to Benin's no-visa policy for African nationals, introduced in 2019, as a strong foundation for building closer ties.

The pivotal role of the Business Eswatini CEO was central to the event. Reflecting on the journey to this moment

"This is a partnership that has been a long way in the making. When we first considered this collaboration, we saw two countries from opposite ends of the continent West

Eswatini, Benin Chambers forge historic trade partnership



▲ Business Eswatini CEO E Nathi Dlamini and Honorary Consul of the Republic of Benin to the Kingdom of Eswatini Pierre Bide shake hands after the MoU signing ceremony.



and South with seemingly little in common. But it was precisely for that reason that we believed this partnership mattered most. We saw not the distance, but the opportunity; not the lack of history, but the potential to write a new chapter of shared economic success," he said.

Growth

He added that the MoU aligns with King Mswati III's "Nkwe" call, which emphasises forging strategic international relations and aggressively attracting Foreign Direct Investment to drive national growth.

"This agreement is a tangible tool for our members and the private sector at large. It opens a gateway to one of Africa's most vibrant economies, creating new pathways

for trade, investment, and knowledge exchange. We are not just signing a document; we are unlocking a world of opportunity for Emaswati businesses and sending a clear signal that Eswatini is open for business," he said.

Training

Echoing these sentiments, the CCIB President described the agreement as an important step in the economic rapprochement of our two countries and committed to ensuring the MoU results in practical support for entrepreneurs, sharing best practices, and training.

He also proposed a reciprocal visit to Eswatini to deepen the institutional relationship, with the ultimate goal of

building a solid, lasting, and growth-oriented relationship.

"This is a concrete contribution to the achievement of African prosperity goals, which will first be built through intra-African cooperation," he affirmed.

His vision, anchored in the CCIB's 2025-2030 strategic plan, is centered on connecting business leaders to the best local, regional, and international opportunities.

The partnership between BE and CCIB is poised to unlock new avenues for Emaswati and Beninese businesses, leveraging respective strengths to create tangible projects that generate wealth and jobs, and championing regional integration for a more prosperous Africa.

FNB Eswatini to honour long-serving clients in 30-year celebration

FNB Eswatini recently hosted the announcement of its 2024/25 Annual Financial Results at its Head Office in Ezulwini, providing insight into the bank's performance over the past year.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Thokozani 'TK' Dlamini and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Njabulo Dlamini presented the results, highlighting milestones, operational progress, and strategic initiatives that shaped the bank's trajectory.

The financial year reflected a period of steady growth for FNB Eswatini, driven by strong customer engagement and innovative banking solutions.

While specific figures were disclosed during the announcement, the bank reported a positive performance across key metrics, including increased deposits, loans, and client activity, signalling resilience despite a challenging economic environment. CFO Njabulo Dlamini emphasised that the bank's operational efficiency and prudent risk management contributed significantly to these outcomes.

Beyond financial performance, CEO TK Dlamini used the platform to hint at an upcoming initiative that would place the spotlight on FNB's customers.

According to Dlamini, plans are underway to organise a special celebration to honour



▲ FNB Eswatini CEO Thokozani 'TK' Dlamini.

long-serving clients and engage customers from all walks of life.

"We are excited about the prospect of celebrating our valued customers. While nothing has been officially announced or finalised, this initiative will highlight our appreciation for those who have supported us over the years," he said.

The proposed celebration aligns with FNB Eswatini's broader strategy of customer engagement and community involvement. By recognising clients who have maintained long-standing relationships with the bank, FNB aims to reinforce loyalty and build stronger connections across its diverse customer base. The CEO stressed that the

bank remains committed to understanding and responding to the needs of its clients, ensuring they benefit from tailored services and innovative financial solutions.

In addition to recognising long-serving clients, the bank intends to create opportunities for broader customer participation, signalling an inclusive approach that embraces customers from various sectors of society.

This approach reflects FNB Eswatini's philosophy of valuing relationships and fostering trust, which has been instrumental in sustaining growth over the years.

The annual results and the hint of a customer-focused celebration mark a significant moment for FNB Eswatini. The bank's leadership reiterated its commitment to operational excellence, strategic growth, and customer satisfaction.

Stakeholders and clients alike are anticipating further details about the celebration, which promises to highlight the bank's dedication to its community and the customers who form the backbone of its success. As FNB Eswatini looks ahead, the combination of solid financial performance and a focus on client recognition positions the bank to continue strengthening its relationships and reinforcing its role as a trusted financial partner in the country.

BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Eswatini launches Drought Centre of Excellence

ESWATINI has announced the launch of the Drought Centre of Excellence, a regional hub dedicated to advancing knowledge, policy, and capacity for drought resilience across Southern Africa. The launch was confirmed during the Disaster Risk Management Forum, held from September 15- 19, 2025 at Happy Valley Hotel in Ezulwini, hosted by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) with support from the World Bank.

Alphabet hits \$3tn in market capitalisation

GOOGLE-parent Alphabet hit a market capitalisation of \$3 trillion for the first time on Monday, riding on renewed optimism around artificial intelligence and a favourable antitrust ruling. Class A shares of the company were up 4.6 per cent at \$251.88, while Class C shares climbed 4.5 per cent to \$252.3 - both trading at record highs. Alphabet joined companies including iPhone maker Apple and Microsoft that have also clinched valuations of \$3 trillion. AI-leader Nvidia has crossed the \$4 trillion mark.

Stocks and dollar hold firm at start of action-packed week

SYDNEY/LONDON — Global shares held near record highs on Monday at the start of an action-packed week that looks certain to see the U.S. Federal Reserve resume its easing cycle, and perhaps leave the door open to a series of interest rate cuts. The Bank of Canada is also expected to cut rates by a quarter point this week, while the Bank of Japan and the Bank of England are both seen holding rates steady.

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy		Sell	
U.S. Dollar	16.9749		17.4406	
G.B. Pound	23.0056		23.6875	
EURO	19.9198		20.5391	
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%		
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%		
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%		
Petrol	E21.60/Litre			
Diesel	E22.90/Litre			
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre			

Pigg's Peak needs E31mln to complete ongoing projects

By Delisa Magagula

PIGG'S Peak Mayor, Councillor Siphon Shongwe, has announced that the town requires E31 million for the 2025/26 financial year to complete ongoing projects and start new ones.

Speaking during a council session, Shongwe outlined that the funds would be directed towards key infrastructure upgrades, including the revamping of town roads and the rehabilitation of market spaces for local vendors.

"The money will be used to complete projects that are already underway and to roll out new projects which are important for the development of Pigg's Peak," he said.

The Mayor explained that the focus was on improving basic services that would support residents and businesses alike. Among the priorities mentioned were the upgrading of access roads to ensure better connectivity, as well as modernising vendor markets to provide a safe and orderly space for small businesses.

Shongwe also emphasised the need for inclusive economic participation. He highlighted that youth engagement remained a pressing issue in Pigg's Peak, where an estimated 67 per cent of young people are currently unemployed.

"We are engaging the youth to start businesses and take part in the local economy. This is one way of tackling the high unemployment rate in the town," he stated.

The Mayor noted that creating opportunities for young people would reduce dependency and encourage innovation within the community.

Shongwe further said the town council was looking at partnerships that could boost en-



▲ Pigg's Peak Mayor Councillor Siphon Shongwe.

trepreneurship. He explained that youth initiatives would be integrated into the council's broader economic development plans to ensure sustainability.

According to the council, discussions are already underway with stakeholders on how best to source the E31 million. The Mayor expressed optimism that once secured, the funds would have a direct impact on improving infrastruc-

ture and creating opportunities for residents.

Pigg's Peak has in recent years been implementing development projects aimed at improving service delivery, though some remain incomplete due to budget shortfalls.

The 2025/26 budget request is expected to determine how quickly the town can address the backlog of projects and meet its development targets.

Residents call for local traders to be prioritised

By Delisa Magagula

COMMUNITY members in Pigg's Peak have called on authorities to prioritise local traders in the town's economic activities.

The call was made during recent engagements where residents expressed concerns over the growing number of foreign traders operating in the town.

Members of the public from ward 1-6 urged the council to allow more opportunities for locals to participate in retail and vending activities.

Residents said prioritising Emaswati would strengthen Pigg's Peak's economy and ensure that money circulated within the country.

They warned that foreign traders posed a risk of relocating with profits made locally, which could weaken the town's economic base.

One of the issues raised was the need for clear guidelines on who is permitted to trade in designated markets. Some residents said that while foreigners contributed to commerce, the limited space in local markets should first be al-

located to citizens.

The community also encouraged the council to support small-scale vendors by expanding market facilities and ensuring fair competition.

They argued that many residents depend on vending as their primary source of income and therefore needed to be protected.

In response, the Mayor of Pigg's Peak, Councillor Siphon Shongwe, acknowledged the concerns and said the council was working on upgrading vendor markets as part of its infrastructure development plans.

Shongwe reiterated that creating opportunities for local traders, particularly young people, was a priority. He added that efforts were being made to encourage youth to consider entrepreneurship as a solution to unemployment.

Pigg's Peak continues to grapple with high youth unemployment, with figures indicating that nearly 67 per cent of young people in the town are out of work. Residents have argued that protecting local market opportunities could form part of a wider strategy to reduce joblessness.

The council has confirmed that consultations with stakeholders are ongoing to balance local participation with wider economic interests.



▲ Vendors at Pigg's Peak want to be prioritised.

By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has announced the launch of the Drought Centre of Excellence, a regional hub dedicated to advancing knowledge, policy, and capacity for drought resilience across Southern Africa.

The launch was confirmed during the Disaster Risk Management Forum, held from September 15- 19, 2025 at Happy Valley Hotel in Ezulwini, hosted by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) with support from the World Bank.

The initiative positions Eswatini as a central player in regional disaster preparedness, with the Centre expected to serve as a knowledge base, training facility, and coordination platform for SADC member states.

Victor Lusekwane Mahlalela, Chief Executive Officer of NDMA, said the Centre will be instrumental in building regional resilience.

“Eswatini is honoured to host the Drought Centre of Excellence, which will play a critical role in enhancing our collective response to one of the most pressing risks we face,” he said.

“Drought continues to undermine development, threaten food security, and strain water resources across Southern Africa. This Centre is designed to ensure that our responses are guided by science, data, and strong partnerships,” he added.

The Centre of Excellence is expected to work closely with governments, research institutions, and development partners to provide technical assistance and share best practices. It will focus on four core areas: monitoring and early warning, policy and planning support, training and capacity development, and applied research.

Nathan Engle, Lead Climate Change Specialist at the World Bank, emphasised the importance of regional collaboration.

“Establishing the Drought Centre of Excellence here in Eswatini is a milestone for the region. We know that drought is not only a national challenge but a transboundary one. It requires joint solutions. The Centre will provide that shared platform where SADC countries can exchange knowledge and build the resilience of communities most at risk,” he said.

The World Bank has committed technical and financial support to the Centre, building on its existing partnership with Eswatini’s NDMA.

The project also aligns with the World Bank’s broader resilience agenda in Africa, which emphasises proactive disaster risk management and climate adaptation.

According to the NDMA, the Centre will also house digital resources, including hazard mapping tools and climate models, enabling countries to improve planning for agriculture, infrastructure, and water management. It will serve as a training site for disaster management professionals and a repository for case studies on effective drought response.

Meanwhile, delegates from across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) welcomed the establishment of the Centre, highlighting that drought has become one of the region’s most recurrent and damaging natural hazards.

In recent years, prolonged dry spells have affected millions of people, reduced crop yields, and increased pressure on governments to provide humanitarian relief.

The Centre of Excellence aims to reduce reliance on reactive measures by promoting prevention and preparedness. Mahlalela noted that the Centre will also support Es-



▲Nathan Engle, Lead Climate Change Specialist at the World Bank, making his presentation.

Eswatini launches Drought Centre of Excellence

watini’s national development goals.

“Hosting this Centre is not just a national achievement but a regional responsibility. We believe it will also empower our own institutions, farmers, and businesses to adapt better to climate variability,” he said.

The choice of Eswatini as host country reflects both its vulnerability to drought and its active role in disaster risk management.

Over the past decade, Eswatini has strengthened its NDMA, adopted a national disaster management policy, and partnered with international organisations to improve resilience.

The Drought Centre of Excellence is expected to contribute to long-term economic stability by safeguarding sectors most affected by climate extremes, particularly agriculture and energy.

“By investing in prevention, countries save money and protect livelihoods. This Centre is designed to help governments make those strategic investments before disasters strike,” Engle added.

The Centre will begin operations in 2026, with initial programming focused on capacity building and establishing regional drought monitoring systems.

Recruitment of technical experts and the development of a digital knowledge portal are already underway.

Delegates at the Forum agreed to support the Centre’s activities through technical contributions, data sharing, and collaborative projects.

The NDMA confirmed that a steering committee involving representatives from SADC member states will be formed to guide its operations.

The Disaster Risk Management Forum continues until September 19, with over 150 delegates in attendance, including representatives from government ministries, humanitarian agencies, and the private sector.

As Eswatini steps into its new role, the Drought Centre of Excellence is expected to become a cornerstone for resilience in Southern Africa, shaping how the region prepares for and manages one of its most persistent natural hazards.



▲A section of the delegation.



▲Some of the regional delegation.



▲ A Google logo is seen at a company research facility in Mountain View, California, U.S.

Alphabet hits \$3tln in market capitalisation ... for first time

GOOGLE-parent Alphabet hit a market capitalisation of \$3 trillion for the first time on Monday, riding on renewed optimism around artificial intelligence and a favourable antitrust ruling.

Class A shares of the company were up 4.6 per cent at \$251.88, while Class C shares climbed 4.5 per cent to \$252.3 - both trading at record highs.

Alphabet joined companies including iPhone maker Apple and Microsoft that have also clinched valuations of \$3 trillion. AI-leader Nvidia has crossed the \$4 trillion

mark.

The latest boost for the Google-parent was a ruling by a U.S. federal judge that allowed the company to retain control of its Chrome browser and Android mobile operating system, marking a pivotal moment for the tech giant whose dominance in search and mobile ecosystems has long drawn scrutiny.

Investor sentiment also got a lift after the company's cloud-computing unit delivered an almost 32 per cent jump in second-quarter revenue, surpassing expectations as investments in in-house chips and the Gemini AI model began to pay off. (Reuters)

UK and US to announce tech, energy deals during Trump visit

By Andrew Macaskill

THE United States and Britain will announce agreements on technology and civil nuclear energy during U.S. President Donald Trump's unprecedented second state visit this week, as the UK hopes to finalise steel tariffs under a much-vaunted trade deal.

Trump and his wife, Melania, will be treated to a display of British royal pageantry during their visit on Wednesday, including a carriage tour, a state banquet, a flypast by military aircraft and a gun salute.

The British government hopes the soft power of the royals will appeal to Trump as it seeks tighter defence, security and energy ties with Washington, having already secured a favourable tariff deal.

Starmer hopes to seal lower tariff rates

Prime Minister Keir Starmer will host Trump at his Chequers country residence on Thursday to discuss working more closely together, on issues like Ukraine, and with the aim of finalising promised lower tariffs for steel and aluminium.

A spokesperson for Starmer said the leaders would sign "a world-leading tech partnership". The two countries will also sign multi-billion dollar deals to develop small nuclear projects which could in some cases help power new AI data centres.

"The UK-U.S. relationship is the strongest



▲ Thames Valley Police officers from their Specialist Search Unit carry out security searches in Windsor ahead of the state visit by US President Donald Trump next week.

in the world," Starmer's spokesperson told reporters. "This week we are delivering a step change in that relationship."

The British leader, a technocrat and a self-proclaimed socialist, and Trump, a proudly unpredictable politician who has pushed the Republican Party further to the right, have overcome their differences to develop a good working relationship.

Starmer was the first world leader to agree an economic deal with Trump on reducing his global tariffs.

Under that agreement, the United States said it planned to reduce tariffs on imports of cars and aluminium and steel. While details on car tariffs were agreed in June, the deal for steel and aluminium is yet to be finalised.

"When it comes to steel, we will make sure that we have an announcement as soon as possible," British business minister Peter Kyle told the BBC on Sunday. (Reuters)

Stocks and dollar hold firm at start of action-packed week

By Wayne Cole and Amanda Cooper

SYDNEY/LONDON — Global shares held near record highs on Monday at the start of an action-packed week that looks certain to see the U.S. Federal Reserve resume its easing cycle, and perhaps leave the door open to a series of interest rate cuts.

The Bank of Canada is also expected to cut rates by a quarter point this week, while the Bank of Japan and the Bank of England are both seen holding rates steady.

MSCI's all-country index hovered just shy of last week's record high, while stocks in Europe rose 0.5 per cent on the day. S&P 500 futures and Nasdaq futures were up 0.1-0.2 per cent.

Markets expect a quarter-point cut from the Fed, which would take its funds rate to 4.0-4.25 per cent, with futures implying just a 4 per cent chance of 50 basis points.

Key too will be Fed members' "dot plot" projections for rates and guidance from Fed Chair Jerome Powell on the extent and pace of any further easing.

Futures already have 125 basis points of cuts priced in by late 2026, so anything less than dovish will disappoint investors.

"The key question for the September FOMC meeting is whether the Committee will signal that this is likely the first in a series of consecutive cuts," said David Mericle, chief U.S. economist at Goldman Sachs.

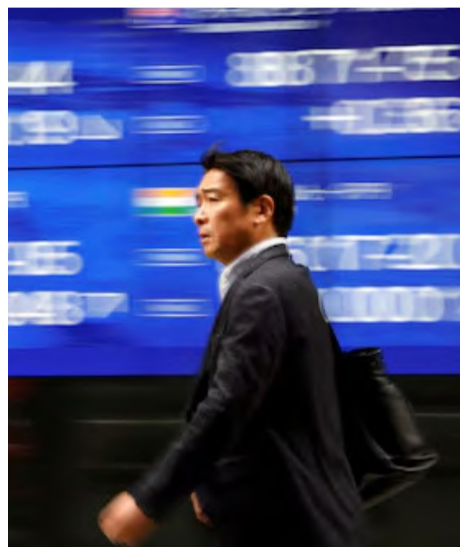
"We expect the statement to acknowledge the softening in the labour market but do not expect a change to the policy guidance or a nod to an October cut."

U.S. President Donald Trump continued his attacks on the central bank on Sunday, saying Powell was incompetent and hurting the housing market.

"Uncertainty surrounding the future path for Fed policy means that some traders are now bracing for volatility around Wednesday's Fed decision, with options markets pricing in a 1 per cent swing in either direction, which would be one of the biggest daily moves in weeks," XTB research director Kathleen Brooks said.

Meanwhile, the euro shrugged off Fitch's downgrade of France late last week, rising 0.2 per cent to \$1.1754. It was a touch weaker against sterling, trading at 86.4 pence, down 0.1 per cent on the day.

The euro has been underpinned by a steady outlook for EU rates, with the European Central Bank signalling last week it was in a "good place" on policy. A host of ECB officials are due to speak this week, including President Christine Lagarde.



▲ A passerby walks past an electric monitor displaying various countries' stock price index outside a bank in Tokyo, Japan.

Elsewhere, the dollar eased 0.2 per cent against the yen to 147.39, while the Norwegian crown rose to multi-month highs against the euro and to a 2023 high against the dollar ahead of the Norges Bank policy meeting later this week.

China data misses

Talks between U.S. and Chinese officials on their strained trade ties and China's divestment from short-video app TikTok on

Monday entered a second day in Madrid.

Data released on Monday showed the Chinese economy lost some momentum in August, with a slew of activity indicators - from industrial output to retail sales - coming below forecasts. Falls in property investment deepened, while home prices declined another 0.3 per cent in August, extending a downward trend that has persisted since early 2023.

"Given the slowdown of the past few months, we expect that there's a strong case for additional short-term stimulus efforts," said Lynn Song, ING's chief economist, Greater China.

"We continue to see a high possibility for another 10bp rate cut and 50bp reserve-requirement-ratio cut in the coming weeks."

Separately, China's market regulator said on Monday that a preliminary investigation had found that Nvidia had violated the country's anti-monopoly law, marking the latest hit for the U.S. chip giant. The company's shares fell around 2 per cent in premarket trading.

In commodities, oil prices pared earlier gains, leaving Brent crude roughly unchanged on the day at \$67 a barrel, backing down after a rally on the back of Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian refineries.

Gold, meanwhile, held steady at \$3,640 an ounce, just below last week's all-time high of \$3,673.95. (Reuters)

‘Selling coffee beans to Starbucks’ – how the AI boom could leave AI’s biggest companies behind

HOW much do foundation models matter?

It might seem like a silly question, but it’s come up a lot in my conversations with AI startups, which are increasingly comfortable with businesses that used to be dismissed as “GPT wrappers,” or companies that build interfaces on top of existing AI models like ChatGPT. These days, startup teams are focused on customizing AI models for specific tasks and interface work, and see the foundation model as a commodity that can be swapped in and out as necessary. That approach was on display especially at last week’s Boxworks conference, which seemed devoted entirely to the user-facing software built on top of AI models.

Part of what is driving this is that the scaling benefits of pre-training — that initial process of teaching AI models using massive datasets, which is the sole domain of foundation models — has slowed down. That doesn’t mean AI has stopped making progress, but the early benefits of hyper-scaled foundational models have hit diminishing returns, and attention has turned to post-training and reinforcement learning as sources of future progress. If you want to make a better AI coding tool, you’re better off working on fine-tuning and interface design rather than spending another few billion dollars worth in server time on pre-training. As the success of Anthropic’s Claude Code shows, foundation model companies are quite good at these other fields too — but it’s not as durable an advantage as it used to be.

In short, the competitive landscape of AI is changing in ways that undermine the advantages of the biggest AI labs. Instead of a race for an all-powerful AGI that could match or exceed human abilities across all cognitive tasks, the immediate future looks like a flurry of discrete businesses: soft-



▲ These days, startup teams are focused on customizing AI models for specific tasks and interface work, and see the foundation model as a commodity that can be swapped in and out as necessary.

ware development, enterprise data management, image generation and so on. Aside from a first-mover advantage, it’s not clear that building a foundation model gives you any advantage in those businesses. Worse, the abundance of open-source alternatives means that foundation models may not have any price leverage if they lose the competition at the application layer. This would turn companies like OpenAI and Anthropic into back-end suppliers in a low-margin commodity business – as one founder put it to me, “like selling coffee beans to Starbucks.”

It’s hard to overstate what a dramatic shift this would be for the business of AI. Throughout the contemporary boom, the success of AI has been inextricable from the success

of the companies building foundation models — specifically, OpenAI, Anthropic, and Google. Being bullish on AI meant believing that AI’s transformative impact would make these into generationally important companies. We could argue about which company would come out on top, but it was clear that some foundation model company was going to end up with the keys to the kingdom.

At the time, there were lots of reasons to think this was true. For years, foundation model development was the only AI business there was — and the fast pace of progress made their lead seem insurmountable. And Silicon Valley has always had a deep-rooted love of platform advantage. The assumption was that, however AI models ended up mak-

ing money, the lion’s share of the benefit would flow back to the foundation model companies, who had done the work that was hardest to replicate.

The past year has made that story more complicated. There are lots of successful third-party AI services, but they tend to use foundation models interchangeably. For startups, it no longer matters whether their product sits on top of GPT-5, Claude or Gemini, and they expect to be able to switch models in mid-release without end users noticing the difference. Foundation models continue to make real progress, but it no longer seems plausible for any one company to maintain a large enough advantage to dominate the industry. (TechCrunch)

Spotify will now let free users pick and play tracks

FOLLOWING its long-awaited launch of lossless streaming for paid subscribers, Spotify is upgrading its service for free users, too.

On Monday, the company announced that free users globally will now be able to search and play any song they want or play a song shared by a friend or an artist they follow on social media.

The company calls the new features “Pick & Play,” “Search & Play,” and “Share & Play,” respectively. With the former, free users can hit play in the Spotify app to pick and play any song they want, or can even search for a particular song and play it.

The “Share & Play” feature could encourage free users to open Spotify when they come across music on social media. For instance, Instagram lets users share a Spotify track to Stories with sound and allows users to share music on Instagram Notes.

Previously, free users could shuffle songs with limited skips on mobile devices.

Spotify says the new features will roll out globally to free users, but there will still be some restrictions that Premium users won’t face.

When reached for clarification, the company told TechCrunch that users on the free mobile experience will have an allocation of “on-demand time,” and when they reach that daily limit, they’ll then be

restricted to a limited number of skips per hour. Spotify did not share what that time limit is, but noted that Premium users will not have these restrictions.

In recent months, Spotify’s ad business has been struggling, with CEO Daniel Ek telling investors the company has been “moving too slowly” on this front.

The streamer wants ad revenue to make up 20% of its overall revenue, but has grown it only to 11% as of June. By adding new free features, Spotify could boost engagement among its free user base, who would then be exposed to more ads.

Spotify says that other features, like its support for lossless, AI Playlists, and Mix, will remain Premium-only offerings, while others like the newly launched Messages and personalized playlist daylist, available to global users, will span both the free and paid experiences, as they had before.

The company’s free users today make up the bulk of its user base. Out of Spotify’s 696 million monthly active users in the most recent quarter, 433 million were free, ad-supported customers. In addition, there were 276 million Premium (paying) subscribers in the quarter.

(TechCrunch)



▲ On Monday, the company announced that free users globally will now be able to search and play any song they want or play a song shared by a friend or an artist they follow on social media.

Israel threatens Hamas ‘wherever they are’

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he didn't rule out further strikes on Hamas leaders "wherever they are" as the heads of Arab and Islamic states held a summit to show support for Qatar after Israel's attack on the Gulf state last week.

The September 9 strike targeting leaders of the Palestinian militant group in Doha marked a significant escalation of Israeli military action in a region shaken by conflict since the Hamas-led October 7, 2023 attacks that ignited the Gaza war.

The emergency Arab-Islamic summit hosted by Doha is expected to warn that the Israeli attack and other "hostile acts" by Israel threaten

coexistence and efforts to normalise ties in the region, according to a draft resolution seen by Reuters.

Addressing the summit, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said the Israeli attack was "cowardly and treacherous", saying Hamas leaders had been studying a U.S. ceasefire proposal presented to them by Qatar and Egypt when it took place.

Hamas says the Israeli attack killed five of its members but not its leadership. A member of Qatar's internal security forces was also killed.

Targeting close U.S. ally Qatar, the Israeli strike has prompted U.S.-allied Gulf Arab states to close ranks, notably adding to strains in ties between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, which were normalised in

2020.

Speaking alongside U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Jerusalem, Netanyahu said Israel was still getting final reports on the results of the strike.

Rubio will travel to Qatar after his visit to Israel, a senior U.S. State Department official said.

Rubio called on Qatar to continue to play a constructive role in resolving the Gaza conflict, saying it could help reach the goals of releasing all 48 hostages still held in Gaza, disarming Hamas and building a better future for Gazans.

"And so we're going to continue to encourage Qatar to play a constructive role in that regard," he said.

(Reuters)



▲ Trump arrives in Britain on Tuesday for his unprecedented second state visit where he will be treated to the usual display of British royal pageantry, including a carriage tour and a lavish banquet.

UK police say they have planned for every eventuality' ahead of Trump visit

BRITISH police said on Monday they had planned for "just about every eventuality" ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's state visit this week, with the bulk of the trip being held out of public view.

Trump arrives in Britain on Tuesday for his unprecedented second state visit where he will be treated to the usual display of British royal pageantry, including a carriage tour and a lavish banquet.

King Charles will host Trump on Wednesday at Windsor Castle, west of London, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and a family home to British monarchs for almost 1,000 years, before the trip continues on Thursday at Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Chequers country residence.

Large crowds are expected in Windsor and anti-Trump protesters have said they want to make their views known.

The high-profile trip comes after

last week's killing of right-wing activist Charlie Kirk, a staunch ally of Trump, fuelling fears of a spike in political violence in the United States.

"I'm very content that we have planned a very comprehensive policing and security operation that has taken into consideration just about every eventuality of what could happen," Assistant Chief Constable Christian Bunt of Thames Valley Police told reporters.

Asked whether Kirk's killing had influenced the policing operation for the visit, Bunt said their plans were kept under constant review.

"Naturally we just reviewed everything ... with our U.S. Secret Service colleagues as well to make sure everyone was content with where we are, and that is the case," he said.

Bunt said there would be a significant, highly-visible police presence, although he declined to say how many officers were being deployed. (Reuters)



▲ Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with Emir Of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and GCC representatives meet ahead of an emergency Arab-Islamic leaders' summit convened to discuss the September 9 Israeli attack on Hamas on Qatari territory, in Doha, Qatar, September

Russia flexes military muscle with hypersonic missiles

RUSSIA said on Sunday that it had fired a Zircon (Tsirkon) hypersonic cruise missile at a target in the Barents Sea and that Sukoi Su-34 supersonic fighter-bombers had carried out strikes as part of joint military exercises with Belarus.

Russia's "Zapad", or West, joint strategic exercise with Belarus began on Sept. 12 aiming to improve military command and coordination in the event of an attack on either Russia or Belarus, the defence ministry said.

Moscow and Minsk have said the exercises are exclusively defensive and that they do not intend to attack any NATO member, though the U.S.-led military alliance announced an "Eastern Sentry"

, opens new tab operation after the incursion of Russian drones into Poland on Sept. 9-10.

Russia's defence ministry released footage of the Northern Fleet's Admiral Golovko

frigate firing a Zircon hypersonic missile at a target in the Barents Sea. The footage showed a missile being launched vertically from the frigate and then powering off at an angle into the horizon.

"According to objective monitoring data received in real time, the target was destroyed by a direct hit," the ministry said.

The ministry said that long-range anti-submarine aircraft of the Northern Fleet's mixed aviation corps were also involved in the exercise. It said Su-34 crews practiced a bombing strike against ground targets.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in 2019 that the Zircon can fly at nine times the speed of sound and hit targets at sea and on land at a range of more than 1,000 km (600 miles).

Russian media sources say the missile, known as the 3M22 Zircon in Russia and the SS-N-33 by NATO, has a range of 400 km to 1,000 km, and that its warhead mass is around 300 kg-400 kg.

(Reuters)

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You have read the rest, now read the best

US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt propose roadmap for Sudan peace

THE United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt called on Friday for a three-month humanitarian truce in Sudan followed by a permanent ceasefire, the countries said in a joint statement.

The so-called “Quad” countries are seen as having the most influence with the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, who have fought a devastating war that has created the world’s worst humanitarian crisis and spread famine.

Foreign ministers of the four countries set forth a roadmap toward ending the conflict, calling for an immediate permanent ceasefire following the truce, and a nine-month transitional process to establish civilian-led governance.

“There is no viable military solution to the conflict, and the status quo creates unacceptable suffering and risks to peace and security,” they said.

Neither the army nor the RSF immediately responded to requests for comment.

The United Arab Emirates has been accused by the army of supporting the RSF, charges U.S. lawmakers and experts have found credible, but which the Gulf state has repeatedly denied. Egypt, and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia, have supported the army. The Quad also expressed support

for the unity of Sudan, at a time when the RSF has been setting up its own parallel government, which swore in leadership last year. The RSF controls most of the Darfur region, which is serving as a base for that government.

It is still fighting the army for al-Fashir, the Darfur region’s historical capital, imposing a devastating siege that has spread hunger throughout the city.

It is unclear whether the warring parties would agree. In June, U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for a week-long ceasefire in al-Fashir, a call the army accepted but the RSF rejected.

The statement also rejected any role for the Muslim Brotherhood or affiliated groups in Sudan, a common enemy of the four countries, a clear reference to the Islamists who controlled Sudan for three decades until 2019 and have staged a resurgence during the war in support of the army.

To that end, the United States on Friday imposed sanctions on Sudan’s finance minister Jibril Ibrahim, an Islamist, as well as the Baraa Ibn-Malik Brigade, an Islamist militia that has fought alongside the army.

The latest round of sanctions “aim to limit Islamist influence within Sudan and curtail Iran’s regional activities,” a statement from the Treasury Department said. **(Reuters)**



▲ Sudanese women who fled intense fighting in al-Fashir sit at a displacement camp, as the humanitarian situation deteriorates amid the ongoing conflict between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese army, in Al Dabba, Sudan.

Congo-Rwanda draft deal outlines role of US, others in revamp of minerals sector

RWANDA and the Democratic Republic of Congo will commit to working with third parties, including the U.S., to revamp their mineral supply chains and develop reforms, according to a draft of an economic framework seen by Reuters, as they seek to spur investment following a peace deal reached in Washington.

The countries agreed on the draft framework, which is part of the peace deal, a source familiar with the matter said, adding that the draft was now being discussed by stakeholders, including the private sector, multilateral banks, and some donor agencies of other countries.

Congo and Rwanda will likely

meet in early October to finalize the framework, the source added. It would be signed by heads of state at a later date.

The 17-page framework comes after the countries signed a peace deal in Washington in June at talks held by U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration. The deal aims to end fighting that has killed thousands and attract billions of dollars of Western investment to a region rich in tantalum, gold, cobalt, copper, and lithium.

The draft builds on an outline for the framework reached in August and sets out implementation measures and coordination mechanisms. The August outline called for cooperation on energy, infrastructure, mineral supply

chains, national parks, and public health.

Congo, Rwanda, and the U.S. State Department did not respond to requests for comment.

According to the draft, the parties would pledge to work with the United States and other international partners to develop additional regulatory initiatives and reforms “necessary to de-risk private sector investment in a cost-effective manner,” to reduce illicit trade and increase transparency.

They would also adopt outside transparency mechanisms, including committing to implement guidance from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, among others. **(Reuters)**



▲ A worker sorts dried coffee beans for packaging into bags at a factory, after the resurgence of the M23 rebel group forced many farmers to flee their land, leaving crops unharvested and livelihoods in tatters, in the outskirts of Bukavu, South Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Congo coffee farmers fear war will undo recent gains

IN the lush highlands of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, coffee crops are rotting and withering as an escalation in the decades-long conflict in the region has kept farmers from tending to their land this year.

Fighting between the government and Rwanda-backed M23 rebels escalated at the start of the year as rebels seized major cities in North and South Kivu provinces, prime coffee-growing areas known for their high-quality Arabica beans.

The latest hostilities have killed thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands more, including farmers. They have also blocked export routes, threatening to curtail what had been a remarkable recovery for the nation’s coffee industry following years of decline.

Coffee bean production in

Congo topped 100,000 metric tons a year in the late 1980s, according to U.N. data, but fell sharply in the 1990s as DRC forces and other armed groups fought in devastating wars rooted in Rwanda’s 1994 genocide.

Output climbed again in the past decade, reaching just over 62,000 tons in 2023, the U.N. data shows.

Cooperatives like SOPACDI in South Kivu province were getting international recognition for their quality beans, and improvements had been made in production methods and in deepening global market connections. Now those gains are under threat.

At the state-run coffee factory in Bukavu, the South Kivu capital, rows of drying beds laid empty during a Reuters visit earlier this month. **(Reuters)**



▲ Sudanese women who fled intense fighting in al-Fashir sit at a displacement camp, as the humanitarian situation deteriorates amid the ongoing conflict between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese army, in Al Dabba, Sudan.

Lesia Musiq signs with Mabonwa Abulawe Records

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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POISED for regional stardom!

Rising star Lesia Musiq from Nhlanguano has officially signed a five-year contract with Mabonwa Abulawe Records, a move that is set to elevate his career to new heights.

The announcement was made public by the label's founder, Young Zesh, who expressed great confidence in Lesia Musiq's potential to become a major force in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) music industry. The contract, which extends until 2030, marks a milestone for Lesia Musiq, who has steadily built a reputation for his distinctive voice and heartfelt songwriting.

When reached for comment, Lesia Musiq conveyed his deep gratitude for the opportunity. "I feel grateful and blessed for such an honourable opportunity because opportunities like these do not come for everyone," he said. He emphasised that signing with Mabonwa Abulawe Records will be instrumental in honing his craft and expanding his reach.

"I am going to gain more experience about the music industry, and I will be able to do my music consistently because I now have a supportive and experienced team behind my back," Lesia Musiq added. His commitment to delivering quality music is clear, as he revealed that he is already working on new material under the label's guidance, promising fans a fresh wave of songs.



▲ Lesia Musiq.

Young Zesh, the visionary behind Mabonwa Abulawe Records, highlighted the qualities that made Lesia Musiq the ideal addition to the label's roster.

Excellent

"The reason we signed Lesia Musiq is because he has a unique voice, and he is very talented. His writing skills are excellent. We also love the SiSwati presentation of his work," he stated. This cultural authenticity

combined with artistic skill positions Lesia Musiq as a promising candidate to become a SADC superstar.

The label's founder assured music lovers that they can expect innovative and compelling music from Lesia Musiq soon. "He is dropping his debut single on October 3, 2025," Young Zesh announced, setting the stage for what many anticipate will be a breakthrough release.



▲ Donald.

Donald to leave emaSwati 'Over The Moon'

ESWATINI fun lovers have all reasons to be "over the moon" as Umuthi Fest has confirmed to feature South African musician Donald.

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

Ticket sales have been robust, reflecting the growing anticipation for the event. Early bird general admission tickets are priced at E150, with pre-sale tickets available at E200 and gate tickets at E250. For those seeking premium experience, VIP tickets are offered at E400 for early birds, E500 during presale, and E600 at the gate.

Donald Moatshe, popularly known simply as Donald, has carved a niche for himself in the South African music scene with his unique blend of afro-soul and R&B. Born in Rustenburg, in the North-West province, Donald's musical journey began at an early age, showcasing his talent and passion for music that would eventually lead to a successful career.

Prowess

His rise to fame can be traced back to 2011 with the release of his hit single 'I Deserve.' This track not only showcased his vocal prowess but also resonated with listeners, establishing Donald as a formidable force in the South African music industry. His ability to connect with audiences through heartfelt lyrics and melodic tunes has been a hallmark of his career.

In 2011, after parting ways with DJ Cleo's label, Donald launched his own recording label, D-Exclusive, marking a significant turning point in his artistic journey. This move allowed him greater creative freedom as he began production on his second album, 'Love Train'. March 25, 2014, marked another milestone in Donald's career with the release of his third studio album, 'Black and White'. The album received critical acclaim and was certified Gold by the Recording Industry of South Africa just three months after its release. His talent was recognised at the MTV Africa Music Awards in 2014, where he received a nomination for Best Male Artist of the Year.

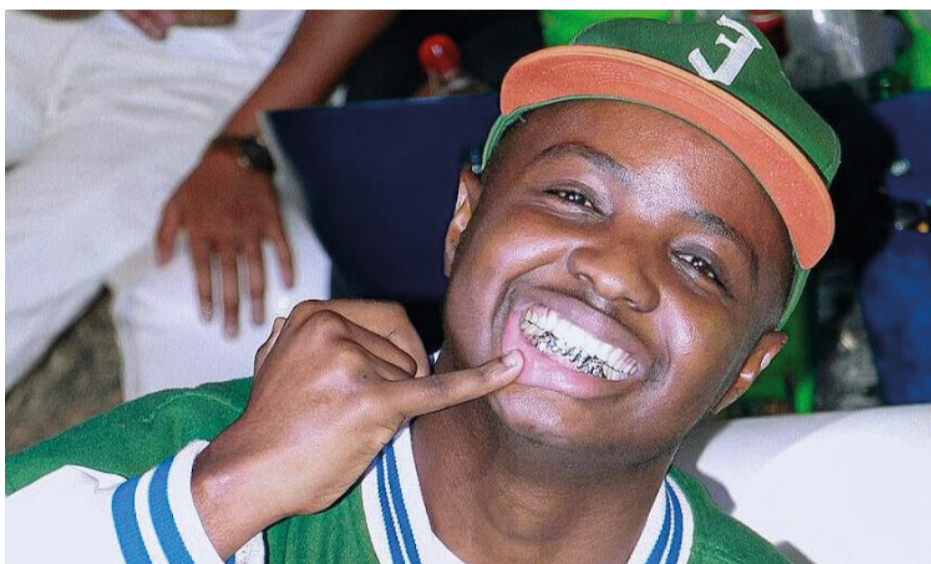
Tony Dayimane headlines Hipnotik Festival's return

SOUTH African rap sensation Tony Dayimane is set to headline the eagerly awaited Hipnotik Festival, marking a powerful comeback for Eswatini's biggest hip-hop celebration.

Scheduled for October 4, 2025, the festival returns after a seven-year hiatus, promising to reignite the country's creative spirit and youth culture with an electrifying lineup and a renewed mission. Tickets for the 2025 event are now available, with general admission at E400, VIP access at E800, and exclusive Golden Circle tickets priced at E1,500.

The festival's revival transcends entertainment; it is a strategic initiative designed to rejuvenate Eswatini's creative economy and empower young people nationwide. In an exclusive interview, festival director and founder Sakhile Nkambule shared his excitement and vision for Hipnotik's return. "We're incredibly excited. The return of Hipnotik isn't just nostalgic, it's strategic," Nkambule said, emphasising the festival's role as a critical platform for local creatives, entrepreneurs, and service providers. He described Hipnotik as "a proven youth-led economic vehicle" that extends far beyond music and entertainment.

The seven-year pause allowed the organisers to reflect on the evolving needs of the creative community and the broader market. Nkambule acknowledged the negative impact the festival's absence had



▲ Tony Dayimane.

on Eswatini's entertainment ecosystem. "We've seen what the absence of Hipnotik did to the local entertainment ecosystem. Now, we're here to restore that pulse and take it further," he explained. While the festival promises an immersive and fun experience, Nkambule stressed that empowerment remains the goal: "It's business time now, fun is the by-product, but empowerment is the product."

Hipnotik was founded on the belief that Eswatini's youth possess immense talent and ambition but often lack the platforms, business skills, and networks necessary

to thrive. "Talent alone is insufficient; it requires platforms, business knowledge, networks, and brand equity. Hipnotik is that convergence point," Nkambule noted.

Looking ahead, Nkambule envisions Hipnotik as a premier youth development platform anchored in entertainment. He described it as a catalyst for job creation, small and medium enterprise (SME) development, digital storytelling, and brand partnerships. "This event is a catalyst for job creation, for SME development, for digital storytelling, for brand partnerships," he said.



▲ Siphofaneni Inkhundla Youth Committee posing for a picture.



▲ Young people marching to Siphofaneni Inkhundla on Youth Day.

By Siphesihle Dlamini
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THE Siphofaneni Inkhundla Youth Committee is buzzing with fresh energy, ambition, and a burning desire to rewrite the story of young people in their constituency.

Their approach is remarkable because they have chosen an unconventional yet practical path, edutainment. By blending education and entertainment, the committee is reshaping how youth in the area engage with empowerment, resources, and the opportunities presented to them.

The committee, made up of representatives from seven different communities, is not just a token structure that exists in name; it has become an active force in mobilising young people, bringing them into spaces where they can learn, explore, and dream beyond their current realities. At its core, the committee understands that today's youth face immense challenges, from unemployment and lack of information to underutilization of constituency funds, but instead of bowing to despair, they are tackling these issues head-on.

Seneme Shongwe, Chairperson of the Siphofaneni Inkhundla Youth Committee from Nceka, carries the voice of many when he explains the motivation behind the movement. "We're thrilled to be growing under the ministry's guidance," he said. His words echo a strong sense of possibility. Shongwe acknowledges that unemployment has weighed heavily on their generation, with many young people waking up each day uncertain of how to chart their future.

Yet he insists there is hope in embracing innovative solutions. "As youth, we're filled with stress due to unemployment, but we're determined to become future leaders empowered with entrepreneurship skills." It is this optimism, mixed with pragmatism, that defines the committee's character. They know the problems. They live with the problems. But they are also crafting solutions.

The momentum of the committee's work was most visible during the recent Youth Day celebration held on August 1, an event that attracted companies, organisations, and key stakeholders from around the country. Unlike many other youth gatherings that are often reduced to mere entertainment, this one struck a delicate balance: fun, networking, and education coexisted seamlessly. For the youth of Siphofaneni, it was more than a day of speeches and dances, it was a chance to witness opportunities with their own eyes, to see that empowerment is not a distant concept but a lived possibility.

From business mentorship sessions

Siphofaneni youth embrace Edutainment for empowerment



▲ The Siphofaneni Inkhundla Youth Committee has become an active force in mobilizing young people.

to entrepreneurship showcases, the day demonstrated what "edutainment" really means in practice. Music and drama were not just there for applause; they were strategically infused with lessons about self-reliance, financial literacy, and innovation. For many young people, it was the first time they encountered the idea that entertainment could carry the seeds of empowerment.

The Siphofaneni Inkhundla Youth Committee has laid down a set of clear and practical objectives that form the backbone of their mission. Their aims are not vague promises; they are actionable commitments that reflect the aspirations of young people across the constituency:

- Create a platform where youth can access information, mentorship, and resources that are often hidden in bureaucracy or limited to the few who know where to look.
- Inform youth about constituency

development funds and national programs that can support their businesses, education, and personal projects.

► Encourage entrepreneurship by supporting youth-led businesses and incubating fresh ideas into sustainable ventures.

► Foster peer-led initiatives using edutainment as a tool, because young people learn best from other young people, and messages stick when wrapped in creativity.

This four-pronged approach ensures that the committee is not only a cheerleading structure but a driver of tangible transformation.

The most exciting step for the committee is their upcoming December 6, 2025, edutainment event in Richards Bay, which they describe as a "refresh and rejuvenate" retreat. It will serve as a platform for young people to break away from the stress of everyday struggles, reflect on their dreams,

and reenergize for the future. Beyond the fun, the retreat is designed to be a strategic space for planning, networking, and setting goals for the year ahead.

This is not just a recreational trip, it is an investment in mental health, community bonding, and the kind of exposure that inspires ambition. For many young people in Siphofaneni, travelling to another country for empowerment purposes is a first, and it symbolises a new chapter in how seriously the committee takes their mandate.

The idea of embracing edutainment also signals a cultural shift. Traditionally, youth gatherings in rural constituencies often focused on sporting tournaments, concerts, or beauty contests, leaving out the critical educational and developmental aspects. The Siphofaneni committee is challenging this narrative by insisting that young people deserve more. They deserve spaces where laughter and music coexist with empowerment and knowledge.



▲ Reality TV star Londie London

Londie London launches new salon, expanding her hair empire in Joburg

FRIENDS and followers have congratulated musician and reality TV star Londie London (real name Londiwe Zulu) on her latest business venture.

The Real Housewives of Durban star took to Instagram to announce her plans to expand her hair empire by opening a new salon in the leafy suburbs of Johannesburg.

In a video showcasing the space where she will set up shop, London expressed her excitement, saying, “Big Girl moves only. One of many.” Having faced scrutiny on the show regarding what she does for a living, the mother of two is determined to prove her critics wrong.

She ventured into entrepreneurship following her separation from her ex-fiancé and father of her children, Hlubi Nkosi.

She recently opened up about the misconceptions surrounding her in *On the Couch* with Wendy Mbatha,

“The fact that I get money through men - I hate it. It always follows me. There’s a new misconception now; just because I went

on another podcast and shared that I went through a rough time and had to pick myself up, people think I’m broke and that I don’t have a house or a car.

“It surprises me, and thinking about who started these rumours baffles me. It’s just sad that people are still saying things like that,” she said.

In July, London announced her intention to take legal action against Gagasi FM presenter Minnie Ntuli, following a video of an altercation between the two on *The Real Housewives of Durban* season five.

The clash culminated in Ntuli hurling insults and repeatedly poking Zulu in the forehead, leaving both Zulu and viewers stunned.

Following the incident, fans of the show called for Ntuli to be dismissed.

Reflecting on the incident, Zulu stated, “Life has thrown so much at me, but I always come out stronger. I’ve realised that I’m incredibly resilient and that I won’t be easily shaken by outside noise.”

(IOL)



Beyonce wins her first Emmy

BEYONCÉ has officially added “Emmy winner” to her long list of titles.

The global superstar took home her very first Emmy on September 14, 2025, winning Outstanding Costumes for Variety, Nonfiction, or Reality Programming for her Netflix special “Beyoncé Bowl”, which was a dazzling production of her NFL Christmas Day 2024 half-time show.

The victory inches her closer to the coveted EGOT status, leaving only an Oscar between her and one of entertainment’s most elite clubs.

Despite the milestone, Queen Bey was noticeably absent from the ceremony at the Peacock Theatre in Los Angeles.

Known for her preference for privacy when it comes to award shows, Beyoncé has never attended the Emmys, and this year was no different.

Her husband Jay-Z, who was also nominated in the same category for producing Kendrick Lamar’s Apple Music Super Bowl LIX halftime show, skipped the evening as well.

Sources say the couple opted for a quiet night in, citing the hectic wrap of Beyoncé’s *Cowboy Carter* world tour and the lower-profile nature of the category.

Fans didn’t have to wait long to see Beyoncé celebrate in her own way. Over the weekend, she lit up Instagram with a mini fashion moment, posting back-to-back looks that had the BeyHive buzzing. First, she stunned in a burgundy Dolce & Gabbana gown with corseted bodice details and dramatic ruching that accentuated her signature curves.

“Thank you so much for my birthday love. I’m thankful to God for another year. Peace and Love,” she wrote in the caption. Hours later, she switched gears with a molten copper Roberto Cavalli gown featuring a thigh-high slit and sweeping train, worn to the REFORM Alliance Casino Night & Gala.

(Bang Showbiz)

Black Motion releases ‘Monateng’, celebrates their SAMAS nominations

BLACK Motion has returned with their latest single, “Monateng”.

The track features percussion from Spice Drums and contributions from longtime collaborator DJ Buckz.

Together, they create a rhythmic experience that reflects the essence of African dance music. Commenting on the single, the duo said, “Monateng is about joy, connection and the energy that music brings. It is an invitation to move together as one.”

Sung in SePitori, the dialect of Pretoria, the track blends Afro house grooves with Latin-inspired rhythms. It is driven by hypnotic drums, layered percussion and chants, elements that have defined Black Motion’s sound for more than a decade.

The song aims to connect listeners to the movement, music and culture that shape the duo’s work. The release of “Monateng” coincides with a milestone for Black Motion.

They are currently nominated for four South African Music Awards (Samas). The

nominations include Best Collaboration for the single “Takala”, Best Dance Album for “The Cradle of Art”, Best Engineered Album for “The Cradle of Art” and Best Produced Album for the same record.

These nominations highlight the group’s consistent contributions to South African music over the years.

Adding to the momentum, they will host their flagship event, Friends of Black Motion (FOBM), on September 20 at The Lion & Safari Park in Johannesburg. The event aims to bring fans closer to the duo’s music and energy, offering a shared experience of culture and community. In a press statement, they addressed the schedule change. “Dear friends of Black Motion, we would like to sincerely apologise for any inconvenience caused, but due to our recent Sama nominations and the opportunities that have come with them, we have decided to postpone FOBM from 6 September to 20 September.”

“The decision allows us to create a bigger



▲ Black Motion has returned with their latest single, “Monateng” golf pre qualifier.

and better experience, one that celebrates this milestone with the energy and excellence you deserve.” (IOL)

Wendy Gumede leads the way at the inaugural I Am Dark and Lovely Festival

SPRING has sprung, and festival season is in full swing, meaning every other weekend there is an event to attend.

Hair care brand Dark and Lovely has entered the group chat and announced their own festival, I Am Dark and Lovely Festival, taking place on November 8, 2025, at 1 Fox Street.

With so many festivals in South Africa, it’s not surprising to wonder what makes this one different.

“It’s Dark and Lovely’s first festival ever, and we’re just really excited to get all our girls together, in a different kind of vibe. We do masterclasses, and we tell our girls how to do their hair.

“This time, we’re telling them to let their hair down,” shared the face of Dark and

Lovely’s Relaxed Hair Care Range, Wendy Gumede. Gumede’s long-term partnership with haircare giant Dark and Lovely began last year and she has been enjoying the journey. “It has been incredible. I was already using the product, and now we’re basically in a marriage,” she exclaimed.

Besides her work with the haircare giant, Gumede is a Film and TV Writer, with her most recent work being Netflix’s “Meet The Khumalos.”

“I started writing when I was really young, and it’s really hard to crack into the industry. It’s really niche, and to be in a place where I get to write comedy and get to write drama and express myself as a writer in so many ways, I think it’s beautiful, and I’m really grateful and blessed

African superstar DJ Uncle Waffles will

be delivering her signature global groove as the headline act at the I Am Dark and Lovely Festival. The lineup features South Africa’s top performers Nasty C, Young Stunna, Mördä, DJ Lag, Cassper Nyovest, Major League DJs, DJ Zinhle, Kabza de Small, Kamo Mphela, Zee Nxumalo, and Lelowhatsgood. “It’s an entire day’s worth of fun. 12 people on a line up, I think they’re going to keep us on our feet the whole day, which is good,” added Gumede.

Bongi Manqele, Brand Business Lead for Dark and Lovely, explained to IOL that the festival is about rewarding the consumer.

“We want to actually say thank you in essence for the support that you’ve given us. You get to the festival and it’s just a great time for you exploring more dark and lovely and then getting a full performance of 12



▲ Wendy Gumede.

artists.” Many beauty festivals often have consumers standing in a queue to complete some task to get free products or merchandise. Manqele says there will be lots of games happening, keeping things interactive. “Everyone is going to walk away with something; it’s a fun time.” (IOL)

FATIGUE and body pain are common and can occur for many reasons.

Muscle weakness and chronic tiredness can often be treated effectively with natural at-home remedies. Aches, pain, and fatigue are common complaints that practically everyone occasionally has. While over-the-counter medications can provide temporary relief, overusing pain relievers can cause unwanted side effects, such as stomach upset. Natural remedies are an option that may help you feel better with fewer side effects. In this article, we'll go over home remedies that have been found to reduce physical discomfort and ease fatigue.

Natural home remedies for body aches and pains

Body aches and muscle pain have many causes, such as:

- ▶ arthritis
- ▶ bursitis
- ▶ tendinitis
- ▶ overuse of muscles
- ▶ illness, including the flu and Covid-19
- ▶ fibromyalgia

There are several at-home, natural remedies you can try for these conditions and health issues that cause physical discomfort. In some instances, you may have the best results if you combine remedies.

Turmeric

Turmeric is a distinctively flavored spice that's commonly used in Indian cooking. It contains curcumin, a compound that has been shown in studies to reduce pain caused by various conditions, including diabetic neuropathy, osteoarthritis knee pain, and sciatica.

Turmeric is available as a supplement, a tea, a powder, or a seasoning. It may be most effective for pain relief when mixed with black pepper.

Heat therapy

Heat therapy has been shown in studies to soothe sore muscles and significantly reduce acute and sub-acute (longer-term) low back pain. Using hot water bottles or heating pads on the abdomen is also effective as a remedy for menstrual pain and premenstrual syndrome (PMS) pain. Heat helps ease pain by opening up constricted blood vessels. The increase in blood flow helps reduce joint stiffness due to osteoarthritis and other conditions.

In some instances, you may find that alternating heat and cold is the most effective treatment for you.

Cold therapy

Ice eases the inflammation, swelling, and pain caused by injuries such as muscle sprains and strains. It can also reduce the pain of tendinitis, bursitis, sciatica, and other conditions.

Applying ice at the onset of pain can be especially helpful. Wrap an ice pack or a pack of frozen peas in a towel and apply it to the affected area on and off for 20 minutes at a time.

Massage

The scientific evidence on the benefits of massage for pain relief is mixed. However, many people swear by both professional massage therapists and at-home massage tools.

If you're under stress or feeling anxious,



you may tense up your muscles, causing them to spasm. Massage is relaxing and can help reduce stress, eliminating this painful cycle. Massaging a muscle when it's cramping can also help the muscle to release.

What's the fastest way to get rid of body aches?

Body aches have a wide range of underlying causes. It may sound counterintuitive, but in many instances, stretching and light exercise may be the quickest way to get rid of body aches. Other quick remedies include:

- ▶ Walking and swimming: This may be especially beneficial for reducing back and knee pain.
- ▶ Arm exercises and shoulder rolls: These exercises can be helpful for calming down shoulder pain.
- ▶ Alternating ice and heat therapy: This may get quick results for joint pain.
- ▶ A hot bath: This can quickly ease back pain.

Natural home remedies for fatigue and weakness

Fatigue and feelings of weakness in the body occur due to various conditions, like insomnia, heart disease, or chronic fatigue syndrome. One of the best natural home remedies for fatigue and muscle weakness is practicing self-care. Taking care of your body and brain can be highly beneficial for improving energy and mood. Self-care strategies to try include:

- ▶ exercising regularly
- ▶ establishing a good sleep hygiene routine
- ▶ reducing or eliminating alcohol, especially at night
- ▶ eating nutritious foods
- ▶ staying hydrated
- ▶ reducing stress through meditation or yoga

When to speak with a doctor

You know your body best. If constant fatigue and aches that won't quit have become a daily or long-term occurrence, speak with a medical professional. Pain that's severe enough to keep you up at night or that doesn't respond to home treatment should also be discussed with a doctor. Diagnostic tests might uncover a condition, such as anemia or diabetes, that's causing tiredness and weakness. It may also be possible that regular fatigue is a side effect of a medication you're taking. If that's the case, a doctor may be able to alter your medication program.

Takeaway

Fatigue and body pain are common occurrences with many potential underlying causes. Muscle weakness and chronic tiredness can often be treated effectively with natural at-home remedies. Body pain or fatigue that doesn't respond positively to at-home treatments should be discussed with a medical professional. **Healthline**

PAIN comes from the communication between your nerves, spinal cord, and brain.

Depending on the underlying cause, your pain may be acute, chronic, neuropathic, or nociceptive, which is divided into visceral and somatic pain types. We all feel pain differently, so you may find it difficult to describe the pain you're feeling to others. You can also experience more than one type of pain at a time, which only adds to the difficulty. Understanding the different types of pain can make it easier for you to talk with your healthcare professional and describe your symptoms. Read on to learn about some of the main types of pain and how they feel in the body.

Acute pain

Acute pain is short-term pain that comes on suddenly and usually has a clear cause, such as tissue injury. It typically lasts fewer than 6 months and goes away once the underlying issue is treated. Acute pain tends to start out sharp or intense before gradually improving.

- Common causes of acute pain include:
- ▶ broken bones
 - ▶ surgery
 - ▶ dental work
 - ▶ labor and childbirth
 - ▶ cuts
 - ▶ burns

Chronic pain

Pain lasting for more than 6 months, even after the original injury has healed, is considered chronic. Chronic pain can last for years and range from mild to severe on any given day. And it's fairly common, affecting an estimated 50 million adults in the United States. While past injuries or damage can cause chronic pain, sometimes, there's no clear cause. Without proper management, chronic pain can start to impact your quality of life. As a result, people living with chronic pain may develop symptoms of anxiety or depression.

- Other symptoms that can accompany chronic pain include:
- ▶ muscle tension
 - ▶ low energy
 - ▶ limited mobility

- Some common examples of chronic pain include:
- ▶ frequent headaches
 - ▶ nerve damage pain
 - ▶ low back pain
 - ▶ arthritis pain
 - ▶ fibromyalgia pain

Nociceptive pain

Nociceptive pain is the most common type of pain. It occurs when potential or actual tissue damage stimulates nociceptors, which are specialized pain receptors located throughout the body, especially in the skin and internal organs. When activated (for example, by a cut, bruise, or inflammation), nociceptors send electrical signals through the nervous system to the brain, which interprets them as pain. Nociceptive pain is the type you usually feel with injuries or inflammation. It can be acute or chronic and is also further classified as visceral or somatic.

Visceral pain

Visceral pain comes from injury or damage to the internal organs. It's usually felt in the trunk of the body, such as the chest, abdomen, or pelvis. It can be hard to



- localize to one exact spot.
- People often describe visceral pain as:
- ▶ pressure
 - ▶ aching
 - ▶ squeezing
 - ▶ cramping

You may also notice other symptoms such as nausea or vomiting, as well as changes in body temperature, heart rate, or blood pressure.

- Examples of things that cause visceral pain include:
- ▶ gallstones
 - ▶ appendicitis
 - ▶ irritable bowel syndrome
 - ▶ Somatic

Somatic pain comes from stimulation of pain receptors in the body's tissues, such as the skin, muscles, joints, connective tissues, and bones (rather than the internal organs). Unlike visceral pain, it's usually easier to pinpoint the exact location.

Somatic pain usually feels like a constant aching or gnawing sensation.

- It can be further classified as either:
- ▶ Superficial somatic pain – from the skin or surface tissues (e.g., a canker sore or a scrape)
 - ▶ Deep somatic pain – from deeper structures like muscles, tendons, or bones (e.g., a torn tendon or a bone fracture)

- Examples of somatic pain include:
- ▶ bone fractures
 - ▶ strained muscles
 - ▶ connective tissue diseases, such as osteoporosis
 - ▶ cancer that affects the skin or bones
 - ▶ skin cuts, scrapes, and burns

- ▶ joint pain, including arthritis pain
- Neuropathic pain

Neuropathic pain results from damage to, or dysfunction of, the nervous system. When nerves are injured or not working properly, they can misfire and send pain signals even in the absence of a specific injury. This can make the pain feel as if it's coming from nowhere.

You may also feel pain in response to things that aren't usually painful, such as cold air or clothing against your skin.

- Descriptions of neuropathic pain include:
- ▶ burning
 - ▶ freezing
 - ▶ numbness
 - ▶ tingling
 - ▶ shooting
 - ▶ stabbing
 - ▶ electric shocks

Diabetes is a common cause of neuropathic pain. Other sources of nerve injury or dysfunction that can lead to neuropathic pain include:

- ▶ chronic alcohol consumption
- ▶ accidents
- ▶ infections
- ▶ facial nerve problems, such as Bell's palsy
- ▶ spinal nerve inflammation or compression
- ▶ shingles
- ▶ carpal tunnel syndrome
- ▶ HIV
- ▶ central nervous system disorders, such as multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease

- ▶ radiation
- ▶ chemotherapy drugs

Other tips for talking about pain

Pain is a very personal experience that varies from person to person. What feels very painful to one person may only feel mild to another. And other factors, such as your emotional state and overall physical health, can significantly affect how you feel pain. Describing your pain accurately can help your healthcare professional find the cause of your pain and recommend the correct treatment. If possible, write down details of your pain before your appointment so you can accurately relay what you're feeling.

Here are some things your healthcare team will want to know:

- ▶ how long you've had the pain
- ▶ how often your pain occurs
- ▶ what brought on your pain
- ▶ what activities or movements make your pain better or worse
- ▶ where you feel the pain
- ▶ whether your pain is localized to one spot or spread out
- ▶ if your pain comes and goes or is constant

Try to use words that best describe the type of pain you feel.

Here are some examples of ways to describe pain:

- ▶ burning
- ▶ sharp
- ▶ dull
- ▶ intense
- ▶ aching
- ▶ cramping
- ▶ shooting
- ▶ stabbing
- ▶ gnawing
- ▶ gripping
- ▶ pressure
- ▶ heavy
- ▶ tender
- ▶ prickly
- ▶ stinging

Keeping a pain diary to track your symptoms can also be helpful. Take note of things like:

- ▶ when it starts
- ▶ how long it lasts
- ▶ how it feels
- ▶ where you feel it
- ▶ how severe it is on a scale of 1 to 10
- ▶ what brought on or triggered the pain
- ▶ what, if anything, made it better
- ▶ any medications or treatments used

If you keep a pain diary, bring it along to your next healthcare appointment.

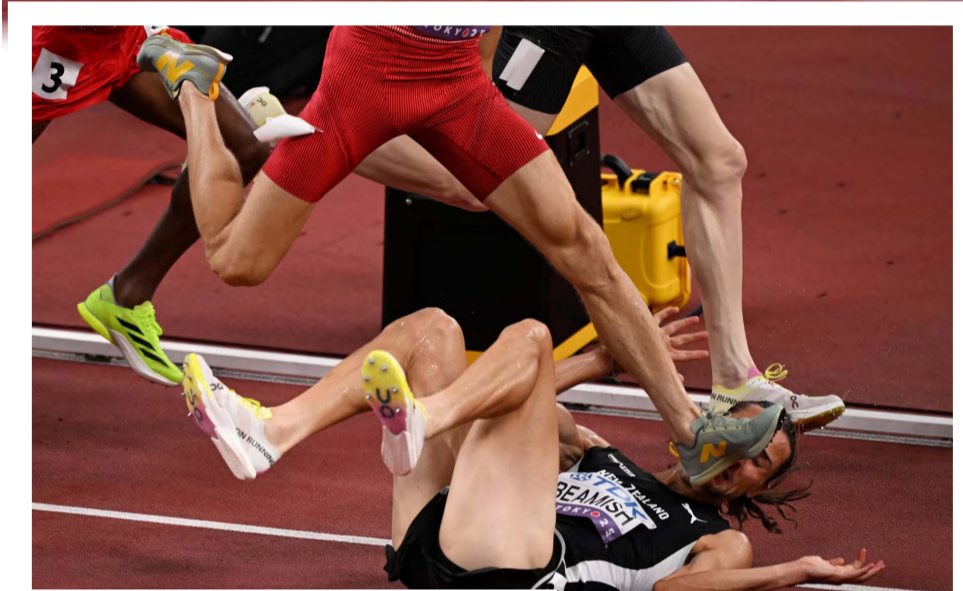
Takeaway

Pain can take many forms, resulting from a short-term injury or a long-lasting nerve condition. Understanding the type of pain you're experiencing and being able to describe it to a healthcare professional can lead to effective treatment and pain management. **Healthline**

Highlights from the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo



▲ Athletes compete during the Women's 10,000m Final.



▲ New Zealand's Geordie Beamish falls over during the men's 3000m Steeplechase Round 1 heats.



▲ Ackera Nugent of Jamaica in action during the Women's 100m Hurdles Round 1.



▲ Kenya's Peres Jepchirchir crosses the finish line to win the Women's Marathon Final.



▲ Kenya's Beatrice Chebet celebrates winning the Women's 10,000m Final.



▲ Sha'Carri Richardson of the U.S. during the Women's 100m Round 1 heats.



▲ Netherlands' Lieke Klaver, Poland's Natalia Bukowiecka and Belgium's Imke Vervaet in action as they pass their batons in the Mixed's 4 x 400m Relay Final.



▲ Ackera Nugent of Jamaica in action during the Women's 100m Hurdles Round 1.

MTN8 victory confirms Orlando Pirates coach is no 'plumber'

ORLANDO Pirates head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou proved his doubters wrong again over the weekend when he masterminded the club's brilliant MTN8 final win over Stellenbosch FC. The Moroccan has had his back against the wall ever since he was appointed by the club following Jose Riveiro's departure. Many called the former Fulham defender a "plumber," and his credentials were questioned.

Prior to taking charge of Pirates, he was the head coach of Marumo Gallants, whom he managed to keep in the top flight thanks to a late run of form. However, despite that, fans and pundits doubted his ability to lead a big club like Pirates.

After the club began the new season with two losses, the knives were out, and speculation that he wouldn't be in the job come the Soweto derby was rife. But since those losses, he's been turning the club's season around one game at a time. In the league, they've won three matches on the spin and have been clawing their way up the table. Most importantly, he's managed to lead the club to another MTN8 title.

Saturday's final wasn't a classic. Both teams squandered opportunities as the game ended 0-0 after 90 minutes. Late in the game, he switched things up tactically, and substitutes Oswin Appollis and Tshegofatso Mabasa were influential when they scored three times in extra time.

Even so, Ouaddou remained characteristically humble about the triumph, acknowledging the doubts that have followed him: "I think maybe I'm still a plumber or carpenter for many people; I don't think myself better than Steve Barker."

The sentiment echoes the challenges faced



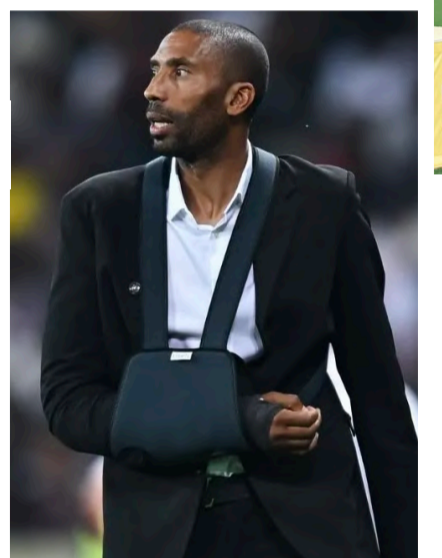
▲ Saturday's final wasn't a classic. Both teams squandered opportunities as the game ended 0-0 after 90 minutes. Late in the game, he switched things up tactically, and substitutes Oswin Appollis and Tshegofatso Mabasa were influential when they scored three times in extra time.

by previous Pirates coaches, such as Jose Riveiro, who was also labeled a "plumber" in his early days but went on to prove critics wrong by leading the team to the MTN8 title in 2022. On Saturday, Ouaddou did the same. If the club can continue their run of form, he will continue to win over fans, and he will be free of the "plumber" tag.

Ouaddou's journey at Pirates is still in its early chapters, but this triumph already feels like a turning point that could define his tenure. He has shown resilience under pressure, tactical flexibility in key moments, and a willingness to trust his squad when it matters most.

With the MTN8 trophy secured, the immediate pressure has eased, but the bigger challenge lies ahead. Maintaining consistency in the league, competing for every cup on offer, and keeping up with rivals in the title race will now be the true tests of his leadership.

Yet, if the early signs are anything to go by, Ouaddou has both the resilience and the vision to guide the Buccaneers into a new era of success. Momentum is on his side, belief is returning to the stands, and suddenly, what began as a sceptical appointment could be the start of a defining chapter in Orlando Pirates' proud history.



▲ Orlando Pirates head coach Abdeslam Ouaddou proved his doubters wrong again over the weekend.

'I know what it's like on the other side'

SPRINGBOK coach Rassie Erasmus sympathised with the All Blacks after his team dealt them a record 43-10 beating in Wellington over the weekend, saying that he had experienced his own fair share of heavy losses in his playing and coaching career. It was the biggest loss in the All Blacks history and the fact that the beating came at home against their fiercest rivals, the Springboks, must make it sting even more.

The Boks themselves suffered their biggest defeat at the hands of the All Blacks, a 57-0 drubbing in Albany, New Zealand, back in 2017, that was arguably the beginning of the end of previous coach Allister Coetzee's rein, with Erasmus taking over as head coach the following year.

While Erasmus admitted the result in Wellington was nice, it wasn't something that they would dwell on, and put it into perspective considering the number of inexperienced players that featured for the hosts.

"We gave our best today. There is huge trust and belief in each other. The scoreline is nice but it is more about what we are trying to achieve (as a team)," explained Erasmus after the match. "I know what it feels

like in the change room on the other side. I don't think we need to dwell on it (the scoreline). New Zealand didn't rub last week's win at Eden Park in our faces, so we'll really enjoy tonight (Saturday), but that's it. "The truth is they had eight players with less than 10 caps and we only had two. We have been building and giving guys chances at certain stages (this season). Guys put up their hands and showed they can do it. We're just glad we got the five points and are still in the mix for the Rugby Championship."

Unconvincing year

It hadn't been a convincing year for the Boks in the lead up to the match at the "Cake Tin" and it was actually an incredibly important game to keep their Rugby Championship hopes alive, while also reviving a season that was teetering on the brink.

They had arguably only had two really strong performances, against the Barbarians (54-7 win) and Italy (45-0 win), while their other wins over Italy (first Test), Georgia and the Wallabies (in Cape Town) were unconvincing.

They had also suffered two losses, against Australia at Ellis Park and the All Blacks at Eden Park, which is the same number of losses they had



suffered over the entire 2024 season.

It was thus a brilliant performance to overturn their defeat from a week earlier, into a record win, but Erasmus claimed the performance wasn't about trying to prove any sceptics wrong.

"This victory wasn't about proving people wrong. We play to get people to believe in us and to keep on believing in South Africa. They trust us to give our best, and we did that," said Erasmus. The Boks now have a chance of winning back to back Rugby Championship titles, if they can win both games against Argentina, while hoping that the All Blacks and Wallabies share the spoils in their two matches coming up.

Chiefs need to reduce squad size – Nabi

KAIZER Chiefs head coach Nasreddine Nabi has admitted the side need to sell or loan some players before the transfer window shuts on September 22. Amakhosi have made a host of signings in the last couple of months and at the moment have a squad of almost 40 players.

"It is true the squad is big. The technical staff and management, through the sporting director Kaizer Jnr, are working on options to offload some players in the squad," said Nabi yesterday.

"(We want to) especially give possibilities to some players who have not had ... enough playing time. And also to young players to get the experience needed in the PSL. Everyone is aware of that and we are working around the clock." Striker Tashreeq Morris, goalkeeper Fiacre Ntwari, left back Happy Mashiane and midfielder Samkelo Zwane

are among those battling for game time at Chiefs who could move, either on loan or a permanent deal. Chiefs will play Sekhukhune United on Tuesday evening in a Betway Premiership clash. Whoever wins the match at FNB Stadium will leapfrog Sundowns at the top of the table.

The game is likely to come too soon for new striker Khanyisa Mayo, who Nabi said is still awaiting his registration.

An injured Etiosa Ighodaro and Lebohang Maboe are also among the new Chiefs signings set to miss this game.

"Obviously there are players that have been recruited, but under different conditions," added Nabi. "Some came to us without having a proper pre-season where they were, or maybe they didn't have a club. "Some had a pre-season but got injured like Ighodaro. That is why we need to be very careful incorporating new players."

(The Citizen)

Isak still not ready, says Liverpool boss Slot, but may face Atletico

BURNLEY - Liverpool fans were denied the chance to watch British record signing Alexander Isak in action as he was left out of the match-day squad for Sunday's 1-0 victory at Burnley, but manager Arne Slot said they will not have to wait long.

Slot confirmed the Swedish forward, signed on deadline day for 125 million pounds (\$169.45 million) from Newcastle United, was still not up to speed after playing barely any minutes this season. But the Dutchman hinted he is likely to play some part against Atletico Madrid in the Champions League on Wednesday.

"Alex is far from ready for that schedule of three games in a week," Slot told reporters after his side's last-gasp Premier League victory at Turf Moor secured by a Mohamed Salah penalty.

"But then we could use him today for five minutes and then Wednesday again 10, and then 15, but we don't believe that is the way to build him up. Sweden did the right thing of giving him good sessions without playing him a lot because if you play the player you cannot give him good sessions.

"They did the right thing and we did the same, so now he will be able either Wednesday or Saturday to play 45 as a minimum, and maybe a little bit more. But if he plays 45 on Wednesday don't expect him to play 45 or more on Saturday because his body is not prepared for that." After effectively being frozen out by Newcastle after making clear his desire to join Liverpool, Isak's only action so far this season was a 20-minute



▲ Liverpool fans were denied the chance to watch British record signing Alexander Isak in action as he was left out of the match-day squad for Sunday's 1-0 victory at Burnley, but manager Arne Slot said they will not have to wait long.

cameo off the bench for Sweden in a 2-0 defeat by Kosovo in a World Cup qualifier this week.

Liverpool certainly could have done with a fit and firing Isak against a stubborn Burnley side who were agonisingly close to holding out for a point despite having Lesley Ugochukwu sent off in the 84th minute.

But a handball by Hannibal Mejbri in stoppage time allowed Salah to score from the spot and make it four wins from four for the reigning Premier League champions.

Liverpool's four wins -- against Bourne-

mouth, Newcastle United, Arsenal and now Burnley -- have all come thanks to goals scored beyond the 80-minute mark.

It is the first time in Premier League history a side has won four successive games so late. "If we had scored (early), the game may have been open but because we didn't, they did the same thing. We had to wait until the end phase of the second half and in the final stages we got what were hoping for," Slot said. "We needed a moment of luck, or a moment of magic. We didn't have the magic but we had the luck." (Reuters)

Alcaraz is a gift for tennis, says Corretja

LONDON - Carlos Alcaraz is a gift to tennis, just when it appeared that a golden era of the men's game was drawing to a close, says former world number two and fellow Spaniard Alex Corretja.

The retirement of 22-time Grand Slam champion Rafa Nadal after the end of 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer's career left a huge hole in the men's game.

But Alcaraz, 22, has already taken his Grand Slam tally to six with this month's U.S. Open triumph while forming an intense rivalry with Italian Jannik Sinner, who has four Grand Slams. "It's a blessing to have a player like Carlos Alcaraz. He is truly a gift to the sport," Corretja told website BolaVIP.

"It is nearly a miracle to be honest. We have had so many great players in the past, but after Rafael Nadal, our legend of the sport, all of a sudden we have Carlos, who is comparable."

"He is winning Grand Slams, he is the world number one. It is something very unexpected and (we are) very fortunate to have him."

Alcaraz reclaimed top spot in the rankings by beating Sinner in the New York final. He and Sinner have shared the past eight Grand Slams between them. "I think we really need to appreciate it, because what he is doing is very, very difficult and he is only 22 years old and has already won six Grand Slams," Corretja said.

"He will win many more Grand Slams in the future. Everybody loves him because he is so natural. He is so humble and simple, and he says whatever he feels. He is very straightforward and acts very well. He is unique."

(Reuters)

Cardoso gives early Zwane injury update

MAMELODI Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso is sweating over a minor injury to club captain Themba Zwane, who was forced off during the 3-0 Betway Premiership victory over Magesi FC at Lucas Moripe Stadium on Sunday.

Zwane had missed the Brazilians' previous four matches in all competitions after suffering a setback against Orlando Pirates last month.

The clash with Magesi marked his return from the treatment table, but his comeback was short-lived as he was withdrawn shortly after coming on. Although it is too early to determine the extent of the injury, Cardoso is keeping his fingers crossed that the 36-year-old will not be on the sidelines for long, having already missed a large part of last season with a torn Achilles tendon.

"We had total clearance for Themba to play, but obviously we knew that Themba, Thapelo Morena and also Siyabonga Mabena were



▲ Mamelodi Sundowns coach Miguel Cardoso is sweating over a minor injury to club captain Themba Zwane, who was forced off during the 3-0 Betway Premiership victory over Magesi FC at Lucas Moripe Stadium on Sunday.

players who should not play more than 30 minutes," Cardoso explained. "Unfortunately, Themba had a small problem, let's see if it's really small, but I hope so. It's not the same injury that he had before.

Let's see what we get, whether it's in the knee or the lower part of the leg. "I thought it was from a contact, but I still haven't spo-

ken properly to the doctor. I think they will examine and do a scan so that we can have the right assessment. Let's hope that it's obviously not a big thing." Sundowns now make the trip to Bloemfontein, where they face Marumo Gallants in a league encounter at the Dr Petrus Molemela Stadium on Wednesday night.

(The Citizen)

Real Madrid begin Champions League bid with Mbappe under the spotlight

MADRID - Real Madrid begin their bid for a record-extending 16th European Cup on Tuesday at home to Olympique de Marseille with coach Xabi Alonso insisting Kylian Mbappe is not impatient to win the trophy and is valued as one of the leaders in the team.

The 26-year-old striker, who helped France lift the 2018 World Cup and reach the 2022 final, has won seven Ligue 1 titles and multiple individual accolades but is still chasing an elusive Champions League crown.

Mbappe moved to Madrid from Paris St Germain last year and saw his former club finally claim their first European Cup while Real fell short in their Champions League title defence after being knocked out in the quarter-finals by Arsenal.

"Kylian is part of the journey, but I don't see him as impatient. Today we talked about what the Champions League means, but we didn't talk about May (when PSG won), we talked about today," Alonso told reporters on Monday.

"We see a project that's just beginning. One of the objectives is to win the Champions League sooner rather than later."

Asked if Mbappe was a leader within the group, Alonso said, "Without a doubt. Because of his personality, his experience ... He's one of them. When that group comes together, you know who you have to follow.



▲ Xabi Alonso insisting Kylian Mbappe is not impatient to win the trophy and is valued as one of the leaders in the team.

Kylian is one of them. "Kylian really likes to understand things, the game. Then he brings that individual quality. But it's not just Kylian, Vinicius Jr or Rodrygo -- we need that collective quality for them to achieve those special things."

Mbappe has scored four goals in four LaLiga games this season, while midfielder Jude Bellingham, who missed Real's four-match winning start to the season in LaLiga with a shoulder injury, has been named in the squad to face Marseille.

Marseille arrive in Madrid with two wins and two defeats from their opening Ligue 1 fixtures.

(Reuters)

Carlota gets World Taekwondo top post nomination

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

VETERAN female Taekwondo athlete Carlota Munave is eyeing a top international post.

Munave has been nominated for the World Taekwondo Athletes Commission women’s category.

She will be competing against four other candidates in her category: Bianca Cook (Great Britain), Saif Salif (Morocco), and Violeta Chavez (Mexico), during the global body elections between October 23 and 29, 2025.

The elections will take place during the global showpiece, the World Taekwondo Championships.

This is according to a statement released by the world governing body.

“All registered athletes for the 2025 WTC are entitled to two votes each (one vote for a candidate of each gender). The one candidate having obtained the highest number of valid votes per gender will be elected as a member of the committee and be announced on the last day of the World Taekwondo

Championships,” the organisation said. Munave previously served in the Eswatini Athletes Commission, and she has been replaced by a male artist, Saneliso Masuku.

Eswatini Taekwondo Federation Vice Secretary Mbongeni Sibandze wished the female Athlete luck during the elections.

“We are proud of Carlota and confident that she will emerge victorious during the elections,” he said.

Munave could join the likes of Sibusiso ‘SwaziBolt’ Matsenjwa and Siwakhile Dlamini (Swimming) in the list of local athletes who are serving in international commissions.

The full list of candidates

Male

- Konstantinos Dimitropoulos (Greece)
- Arian Salimi (Iran)
- Tarek Mousalli (Lebanon)
- Mehmet Kani Polat (Turkiye)
- Yigithan Kilic (Turkiye)
- Kostiantyn Kostenevych (Ukraine)

Female

- Carlota Munave (Eswatini)
- Bianca Cook (Great Britain)
- Safia Salih (Morocco)
- Violeta Chavez (Mexico)



▲ Veteran female Taekwondo athlete Carlota Munave is eyeing a top international post.

Minister Nzima awards victorious Eswatini T20 squad

By Chris Dlamini

THE three-day Eswatini and Mozambique bilateral T20 series ended in joy for the former.

Eswatini won four out of five matches at the Malkerns Country Club over the weekend.

However, due to the thunderstorms that ravaged some places in the kingdom, the fifth match had to be abandoned a few minutes after its kick-off on Sunday.

The closing and awards ceremony then got underway with the Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Minister Bongani Nzima joining the men’s team and the Mozambican side. He awarded

the winning Eswatini squad its trophy and gold medals.

“A huge thank you to Century Fashions for their generous E50 000 sponsorship that made this series possible. “Appreciation is also extended to the other partners including Clover Eswatini and Buy n Save Spar,” wrote Eswatini Sport and Recreational Council (ESRC) as also posted on their Facebook page.

The post further stated that through this victory, the country has earned six points towards its rankings International Cricket Council (ICC) rankings. ESRC also congratulated the Eswatini Cricket Association (ECA) and the Eswatini National Cricket Team for hosting a successful series and going on to win it.



▲ Eswatini cricket national team receiving their trophy from minister of Sports, culture and youth affairs after being Mozambique at Malkerns country club.



▲ Netball playesd and coaches during training. Instet, Eswatini National netball association vice president Philile Khathwane.

Coaching course for netball coaches

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THE Eswatini National Netball Association continues to empower local coaches.

The mother body will host a coaching workshop on September 28, 2025 at the OlympAfrica Centre.

The course is aimed at empowering coaches ahead of the 2025 Swaziland Building Society E150 000 league. ENNA vice president Philile Khathwane announced the course

during a sponsorship presentation held on Saturday at Mavuso Sports Centre.

“We would like to invite coaches and Netballers to an upcoming coaching workshop to take place on September 28, 2025. The workshop is an opportunity for skills development. Coaches can contact our head of Coaches, Themba Dlamini, for queries,” she said.

She further thanked the financial Institution for continued support.

“We are grateful for the support of the sponsor, which plays a major role in the development of the sport. It has further enhanced the

immense growth of the sport at the international level through the good performance of our national teams,” she said.

Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Darius Dlomo applauded the partnership between the two bodies.

Dlomo was represented by Finance Manager Nqobile Dlamini.

“We commend the healthy relationship between the sponsor and association. The partnership has contributed to the development of sport in the country. The Eswatini Netball Association is one of the complying associations,” she said.



▲2025 King's Cup golf champion Hayden Griffiths with his wife Charlotte and children Harper and Cruz after the tournament.

By Chris Dlamini

A COOL E240 000 has gone after a point difference.

Talk about a case of being so near, yet too far, that is exactly how one can describe King's Cup 2025 runner-up Keenan Davidse and the eventual champion, Hayden Griffiths. The duo was separated by just one point on Sunday as the tournament ended.

Interestingly, Davidse led on the first day, then on the second day, they had a big run with Griffiths, but it was in the final round on Sunday that the champion got his chance to get in front. Davidse would have become the first champion to defend his title since its inception over a decade ago.

Commenting on his triumph, the South African champion, Griffiths, made note of the point difference in their final scores.

"Keenan Davidse had a good run. He kept me on my toes. I had to play pretty solidly to beat him. I had actually thought he'd gotten his last shot but narrowly missed, and I won," said Griffiths.

Worth mentioning is that the champion, also South African, was winning his second King's Cup title on the greens of the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club. He was the champion in 2023 and with the same Swati caddy Sonnyboy Sithole. The latter received E15 000 as his share of the E240 000 grand prize. Griffiths confirmed Sithole's share, which is just a little under the standard international 10 per cent.

Tournament Director Vusi Dlamini explained that in the King's Cup, it was always between the golfer and the caddy.

Frustrating for me — J. Pennington

Eswatini's pride in golf at the moment, James Pennington finished ninth in the King's Cup 2025.

Judging from his post-match comment, he could do better than just a top 10 finish. He was once again the best performer among the Swati professionals, just as he was in the FNB Eswatini Challenge early last month.

"Frustrating. That is the best word, I think. I felt like I played well a lot of the time, but just a few too many mistakes.

"I started well today (on Sunday) and was close to the lead but two bad holes

MORE FROM KING'S CUP 2025:

Davidse kept me on my toes — Griffiths



▲Griffiths posing with some of the tournament's main sponsors.



▲Local PRO James Pennington finished 10th of 66 golfers in the competition.

in the back nine, and it cost me," said a disappointed Pennington.

Otherwise, he said it was yet another learning experience for him after the FNB Eswatini Challenge, playing abroad and in South Africa (SA) often.

"My golf is good enough, but I made a lot of mistakes in this tournament. I'm glad to be the best for the country again, but I can do better," he said.

Meanwhile, Pennington finished ninth and shared the E27 002 prize with another golfer after tying scores.

His Majesty trusted us, we delivered — Sam Richards

The King's Cup 2025 has come and gone - a success it was indeed!

Commenting for the King's Cup Committee soon after the champion Hayden Griffiths was presented with the winner's trophy at the Ezulwini Golf and Country Club on Sunday, the Chairman, Sam Richards expressed their gratitude to His Majesty King Mswati III for trusting them to run the E3.1 million sponsored golf tournament.

"The tournament went well. It was a huge success, and all the golfers were happy to be here. They also brought business here as

they stayed in our hotels.

"It was a worthwhile experience for our visiting golfers from four Southern Africa countries as well as our amateur golfers who got the opportunity to play with the professionals and learn from them," Richards said.

The tournament had golfers from Malawi, South Africa (SA), Zambia, and Zimbabwe joining the Eswatini golfers on the greens.

"With such success, we applaud our Patron, His Majesty the King. Bayethe!" said Richards.

He then wished the travelling golfers a safe journey back to their respective countries while extending another invite to next year's edition.



▲Ministry of Tourism Principal Secretary Khangeziwe Mabuza presenting champion Hayden Griffiths with the trophy.

AFTER A SEASON OUT IN THE WILDERNESS:

Trophies too far, relegation battle first – ‘Nyanga’, ‘Mbazo’

Stories By Chris Dlamini

“LET’S set realistic goals,”
This is the big call made by the club’s former defender and now legend, Jerry ‘Mbazo’ Gamedze who seemed to agree with their coach, veteran Nyanga ‘Crooks’ Hlophe.
The duo, in separate interviews, gave statements that were contradictory to the team’s new co-Managing Director (MD) Mlamuli Mabuza who is also a businessman and former Khubutha legislator.
The latter, in his address to the Wanderers supporters during a recent meeting at Manzini Library, said they were expecting to make an impact and were not going to be relegated as they return to action in the 2025/26 season.
The ‘Weslians’ spent last season battling for survival in the courts as they successfully challenged their relegation.

Faded

“We are in a fresh start with players having not played last season. We learned a lot from the 8Bet Trade Fair Cup as we saw that our team played well in the first half then faded. It’s because we’re just starting afresh and practice makes perfect.
“Going forward, I believe Wanderers cannot play by themselves but needs everyone who calls themselves Wanderers on board to support in every way possible if we are to build the team again. We can’t expect trophies yet there are too far,” he said.
Hlophe gave his honest assessment of the situation without a doubt. He appealed to all their supporters to not just be there to watch but to go beyond that in rendering support.



▲ Manzini Wanderers players and Coach Nyanga Hlophe.

Meanwhile, the team’s former defender and captain, Gamedze, well-known as Mbazo, shared similar sentiments.
“I heard the MD say we won’t be relegated but I believe we need to set realistic goals. Wanderers just returned as a new team after spending last season in the wilderness.
“We can only target fighting relegation first for the entire first round, then try

finishing in the top 8 or 6 even,” he said.
He said they were coming from the wilderness, which was going to take quality players to sustain the team.
“We are still trying to ensure the players we have can sustain the team in terms of fighting relegation, which is our primary objective in the first round,” said Gamedze.
He also said it was only in the 2026/27

season that they could expect to challenge for honours after they had seen their players’ quality in the upcoming season.
Gamedze further appealed to all the team’s supporters to rally behind it and even contribute crucial equipment like soccer boots to the players.

League set for mid-October kick-off

THE Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) will discuss the league kick-off on Saturday.
This will be part of the agenda when the PLE has its Special General Meeting at Sigwaca House, Mbabane.
The organisation’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Pat Vilakati announced the meeting on Monday.
“Teams have already been invited to a meeting at Sigwaca House this coming Saturday. That’s where we’ll talk to the league kick-off issue as there’s a lot to consider,” he said on national radio, EBIS’s Sport Show on Monday.
Vilakati said now that they were certain to have the new league sponsorship deal signed between them and MTN Eswatini by the end of this week, ahead of meeting the teams on Saturday.
“We are finalising the sponsorship logistics. Otherwise, the league will start, but we must be considerate of our two teams in the CAF competitions and the senior national team Sihlangu as we have another FIFA week from October 6-14,” he said.
Vilakati said teams would assist them in finalising the official kick-off date once

all these factors have been discussed. The league could resume without Nsingizini Hotspurs and Royal Leopard or wait until after the FIFA week.
During the upcoming FIFA week, Sihlangu will host Angola at Somhlolo National Stadium before flying out Cape Verde to finish their unsuccessful Group D World Cup 2026 Qualifiers.
“Looking at all these, we will definitely have midweek fixtures to catch up on time as we must finish the season by May 31, 2026,” explained Vilakati.
He said they acknowledged that they were already behind but would compensate for that with a full and detailed fixture for the first time in the history of the PLE.
“Our fixture will carry the time, date and venue for every match as we try to improve,” he said.
Vilakati saw this as a step forward towards professionalism, but did highlight there would be challenges here and there along the way due to venue availability or non-availability at that given time.



▲ Last season’s league champions Nsingizini Hotspurs.



MTN8 victory
Page 19 **confirms**
coach is no
‘plumber’

League *Page 23*
set for
mid-October
kick-off



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AFTER A SEASON OUT IN THE WILDERNESS:

Trophies too far, relegation
battle first – ‘Nyanga’, ‘Mbazo’

● **Hub giants Manzini Wanderers head coach Nyanga ‘Crooks’ Hlophe and club legend Jerry ‘Mbazo’ Gamedze believe it would be folly to expect much, but they can aim at fighting relegation first. *Page 23***