

King, Turkmenistan
President strengthen
bilateral relations

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and reality — HMK

By King’s Office Correspondents

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Africa must bridge gap between vision and reality — HMK

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NEW YORK, USA — His Majesty King Mswati III has called upon African countries to bridge the gap between their vision and the current reality on the ground.

His Majesty was speaking through Finance Minister Neal Rijkenburg here during the global launch of the Africa Strategic Investment Alliance (ASIA), led by AeTrade Group, under the theme: “Uniting People, Capital and Prosperity”.

The aim of the launch is to align public policy and private capital to promote inclusive growth, particularly for women and youth.

His Majesty the King is the inaugural Chairperson of the Presidential Advisory Council for the AeTrade Group, a Pan-African Diaspora-led continental organisation with a mission to eradicate extreme poverty in Africa over the next decade.

“As we all know, we have a huge ambition which is not aligned with our reality as a continent. We must bridge this gap between our vision and the reality on the ground. That is why the theme is apt – Uniting People, Capital and Prosperity: Public-Private and Philanthropy Partnerships for Africa’s financial inclusion agenda: Strategic Investment Alliance (ASIA) to address critical development challenges through pragmatic and tested solutions,” His Majesty stated.

He said Africa is the youngest continent by age, yet the oldest as the birthplace of all humanity.

The King noted that by 2030, the number of young people in the African labour force will increase to 375 million.

“According to the International Monetary Fund, by 2035, more than 20 million young Africans will enter the workforce each year, which is more than the rest of the world combined. There is a significant gap between the number of young people seeking work and the limited opportunities available to them. Moreover, there is a mismatch between the skills of young people entering the workforce and the needs of employers,” the King said.

The King, through the minister, expressed hope that the deliberations would provide technical and financial support to enable the continent to realise its ambition to mobilise resources and create between 80-125 million jobs over the next 15 years.

“We have mobilised African citizens and held three successful Africa Job Creation events since 2023. I wish to commend the AeTrade Group, the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia for co-organising these events and to welcome the outcome statement in the Adwa Declaration. I am told the latter was a resounding success and deserves to be elevated to a Summit,” he said.

His Majesty announced that the Kingdom of Eswatini has invested US\$5 million (approximately E100 million) as catalytic funding to enable the ASIA structure to support small businesses, youth and women.

The King further pledged to engage all African traditional leaders and African Union Heads of State and Governments to do the same.



▲ Finance Minister Neal Rijkenburg poses with Commissioner of Agriculture at the AU Moses Vilakati and other delegates during the global launch of the Africa Strategic Investment Alliance (ASIA).

“Our vision and mission is to harness digital technologies to create these jobs through a robust ecosystem to support Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises to become the engine of economic growth and the major drivers of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

“During the inaugural Presidential Advisory Council of the AeTrade Group, chaired by the Kingdom of Eswatini in Niamey, Niger in 2022, the AfCFTA Secretariat, ably led by Secretary General Wamkele Mene, signed an MOU with the AeTrade Group to ensure that the single integrated market becomes a reality.

“I am pleased to see their strategic partnership evolving to this level where we now engage the global community to join hands with us to ensure that Africa advances digital and financial inclusion, powered by digital platforms created by various partners including Mastercard, Microsoft and others. We embrace our global partners to join us to ensure we win the fight against poverty using the resources within our collective reach,” he said.

His Majesty said ASIA was established to make a difference in the financial landscape by creating a special-purpose vehicle to ring-fence financing to address the substantial SME financing gap of US\$330 billion per year across the African continent.

“We acknowledge that domestic sources of finance are available in fragmented funds across the continent, and our major task is to pool these resources and channel them more efficiently using available digital platforms such as Sokokuu.Africa. This source of funding may not be adequate, which is why we are turning to our partners beyond the continent,” he said.

Attending the launch were the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Amina Mohammed, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission represented by Chief Fortune Charumbita, the President of the Pan-African Parliament, the Secretary General of the AfCFTA, Wamkele Mene, the Regional Director of the UNDP Bureau for Africa, Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa, CEO of AeTrade Group, Muluaem Syoum, commissioners, ministers, ambassadors and leaders of private sector and philanthropic organisations.

AeTrade Group CEO Muluaem Syoum framed the alliance as an open platform for governments, investors and civil society to accelerate job creation and economic transformation across Africa.

“AeTrade is open to all those interested in inclusive growth,” Syoum stated,

◀ Minister of Finance, Hon. Neal Rijkenburg.



calling for immediate action to convert commitments into measurable employment outcomes.

The AU Commission Chairperson, through Commissioner Moses Vilakati, conveyed that this platform requires immediate action, uniting the strengths of all into a single voice, lowering financing costs and addressing energy challenges to transform communities.

“Africa is intended to lead the agenda, with the world following suit. SMEs continue to be essential contributors in this context,” he said.

The UNDP Bureau for Africa’s Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa also addressed the gathering, praising the effort to unite African stakeholders around shared prosperity. The UNDP highlighted the resilience of African women and youth, particularly within the informal economy, and called for policies that protect earnings while creating pathways to formal employment.

Panellists emphasised targeted interventions such as vocational training, digital inclusion and small and medium enterprise (SME) financing to ensure that growth is broad-based and inclusive, including the creation of markets. Panellists reiterated that today’s action can transform the future of young graduates.

They urged participating countries and partners to prioritise scalable projects that generate sustained employment, formalise informal work and strengthen skills development.

The discussions produced a set of prioritised actions, including accelerating public-private partnerships, scaling youth entrepreneurship programmes, skills training, expanding women-led business financing and building regional investment pipelines that reduce barriers to cross-border trade and labour mobility.

Long-term sustainability and ensuring that the underserved are not left behind were also highlighted. The need for capital was emphasised above skills training so that the skills attained are put to use.



▲ The President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedow, yesterday paid a courtesy visit to His Majesty the King ahead of the official opening of the 80th United Nations General Assembly. (All Pics; Bawethu Sithole - State Photographer)



▲ Eswatini Ambassador to the United Nations, Thamié Dlamini takes notes while Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Pholile Shakantu, Prince Gcina and Prince Lindani look on as the two leaders engage.

Turkmenistan President, King strengthen bilateral relations

By King's Office Correspondents

NEW YORK, USA – The President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedow, yesterday paid a courtesy visit to His Majesty the King ahead of the official opening of the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Tuesday. The meeting took place at the Mandarin Hotel and was attended by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Pholile Shakantu, the Eswatini Ambassador to the UN, Thamié Dlamini, Prince Gcina and Prince Lindani. During the talks, His Majesty congratulated Turkmenistan for its upcoming Independence anniversary on 27 September, 2025, among other mutual areas of interest between the two countries.

The meeting follows His Majesty's recent working visit to Turkmenistan last month, where the two countries formally established diplomatic relations aimed at enhancing cooperation in economic diversification, sustainable development and peacebuilding. Both landlocked nations, sharing membership in international organisations such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations, seek to address common challenges such as trade vulnerabilities and climate-related issues by utilising Turkmenistan's expertise in natural gas and desert agriculture alongside Eswatini's development objectives. The agreement was signed by Turkmenistan's Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs, HE Rasit Meredow, and Eswatini's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Pholile Shakantu. Following this signing, the two countries

initiated high-level discussions to transform their zero-trade status into a cooperative economic and technological partnership. The talks focused on multiple sectors including ICT, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, infrastructure and energy, aiming to foster mutual growth and formalise agreements for collaboration in the following areas:

- **On technology and ICT collaboration:** Eswatini expressed interest in partnering with Turkmenistan on space and satellite technology, data centres and manufacturing complex electronic products, with plans to formalise cooperation and participate in Turkmenistan's ICT exhibition.
- **In energy and infrastructure development:** Both countries highlighted energy cooperation and sustainable solutions, with Eswatini proposing bitumen sales for regional markets

and exploring Turkmenistan's raw material stock exchange for trade opportunities.

- **On trade in textiles and agriculture:** Discussions included Eswatini's interest in importing cotton from Turkmenistan and exporting agricultural products, while Turkmenistan showed enthusiasm for benefiting from Eswatini's growing textile sector and exploring wheat and rice grain trade.
- **Mining, oil, and sugar sector cooperation:** Eswatini invited Turkmenistan to explore its mineral resources and discussed securing fuel reserves through Turkmenistan's raw materials, alongside plans to export sugar to Turkmenistan, with positive responses from Turkmenistan's ministers.

Africa unites in Eswatini for First Agroecology and Climate Justice Indaba

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Mavuso Exhibition Centre in Manzini became the centre of continental dialogue on food security and climate resilience this week, as PELUM Eswatini hosted the first-ever Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Justice Indaba. The two-day gathering, themed "Agroecology for Food Systems Resilience and Climate Justice", has brought together farmers, policymakers, researchers, and development partners from across Africa. Delegates from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Eswatini converged to share strategies on how agroecology can address pressing agricultural and climate challenges. The landmark event signals a new chapter in Africa's effort to transform food systems while ensuring environmental justice and resilience against climate change.

What is Agroecology?
Agroecology is both a science and a



▲ Ministry of Agriculture PS Sydney Simelane following the proceedings with some guests who attended the event.

practice. It applies ecological principles to the design and management of sustainable farming systems. Unlike conventional agriculture, which often depends heavily on chemical inputs and monoculture production, agroecology promotes:

- **Diversity in farming systems** – encouraging crop rotation, intercropping, and integrating livestock.
- **Soil health restoration** – through organic composting, reduced tillage, and natural fertilization.
- **Water conservation** – adopting techniques that improve water use efficiency.

- **Local seed preservation** – strengthening farmers' independence and resilience.
- **Community-driven farming** – placing farmers at the heart of decision-making and linking food production to cultural and social values.

It is widely recognized not just as a farming method, but as a pathway to climate action and social justice, since it reduces greenhouse gas emissions, promotes biodiversity, and empowers smallholder farmers especially women and youth.

Key Discussions
The Indaba featured vibrant panel sessions and workshops. Among the most significant

were:

- **"Unpacking Agroecology in Relation to Sustainable Food Systems and Climate Resilience"** – Experts emphasized that agroecology provides long-term solutions to food insecurity by building systems that can withstand floods, droughts, and pests worsened by climate change.
- **"Agroecology and Climate Action: Leveraging Agroecology in Accelerating National Climate Action Agenda"** – Speakers highlighted how governments can integrate agroecology into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, making farming a front-line solution in combating climate change.

Participants agreed that conventional agriculture alone cannot guarantee food sovereignty in Africa, especially as climate patterns grow unpredictable. Agroecology, they argued, offers a balance between productivity, sustainability, and justice ensuring that smallholder farmers, who produce up to 80% of Africa's food, are not left behind.

Two killed, three injured in Simunye road tragedy

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

A TRAGIC road accident claimed two lives and left three others seriously injured on Monday night along the UP 17 public road at Simunye Section 4.

According to the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, the crash occurred at around 9:00 p.m. on 22 September 2025 when a Honda Fit sedan, driven by a 22-year-old man from Malkerns, knocked down three pedestrians while travelling from Lusoti towards the Sugar Mill.

The pedestrians were identified as a 46-year-old man from Kukhanyeni, a 39-year-old man from Mkhuzweni, and a 30-year-old man from Shewula. Tragically, the 46-year-old and the 39-year-old died instantly at the scene, while the 30-year-old victim was rushed to Lusoti Clinic before being transferred to Raleigh Fitkin Memorial (R.F.M.) Hospital, where he remains in critical condition.

Inside the vehicle, the impact also left the driver and his 28-year-old female passenger with serious injuries. Both were admitted to Lusoti Clinic, where they are being treated for severe chest pains and trauma.

Assistant Superintendent Mnguni confirmed that the Honda Fit was extensively damaged during the collision, underscoring



▲ Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni,

the severity of the impact. Police are still investigating the exact circumstances that led to the crash.

“We urge motorists to exercise extreme caution, especially when driving at night, and to always observe speed limits,” Mnguni said.

The accident shocked the Simunye community, where residents have long expressed concerns over the safety of pedestrians on the UP 17 road, which is heavily used by both vehicles and foot traffic. Calls are growing for improved road safety measures, including better lighting, speed calming mechanisms, and designated pedestrian crossings.

The bodies of the deceased have been taken to the government mortuary, while families are being notified. This latest accident adds to the mounting number of road traffic fatalities reported in Eswatini, with police repeatedly warning that reckless driving and speeding remain the leading causes of road deaths.

Another drug bust at Nyonyane, woman arrested

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has escalated its war against illegal drug cultivation and trafficking following yet another major dagga destruction operation in the Nyonyane area.

On Tuesday, officers from the Anti-Narcotics Unit descended on the rural community, targeting large swathes of dagga fields to curb the production of the illicit crop. According to police reports, approximately twenty-seven (27) hectares of dagga were destroyed using advanced drone spraying technology, while an additional thirty-five (35) hectares were cleared using conventional ground spraying methods.

Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, confirmed the development and stressed that the exercise formed part of the broader national campaign to suppress drug-related crime. “This operation demonstrates our continued commitment to



▲ The REPS have urged community members to play an active role in reporting cases of illegal drug farming and trafficking,

rooting out drug cultivation and trafficking, which remains a serious threat to public safety and the country’s moral fabric,” she said. During the raid, police also arrested a local woman who was allegedly found in possession of a bag of dagga. She is set to appear before the Pigg’s Peak Magistrate Court on Wednesday, where she will face charges related to the possession of illegal drugs.


Police say the arrest highlights how some individuals in rural communities continue to engage in dagga farming as a means of livelihood, despite repeated awareness campaigns and tough penalties for offenders.

Over the years, Eswatini has been identified as one of the Southern African countries grappling with dagga cultivation, particu-

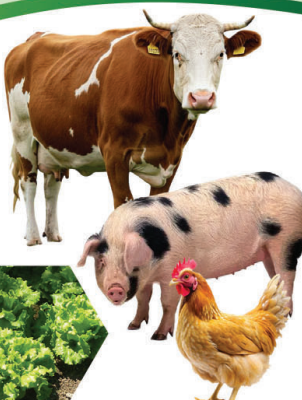
larly in remote areas where law enforcement often faces logistical challenges. However, the adoption of modern technologies, including the use of drones in aerial spraying, has enabled the Anti-Narcotics Unit to conduct more effective and wide-reaching operations.

The REPS have urged community members to play an active role in reporting cases of illegal drug farming and trafficking, warning that the fight against narcotics cannot be won without grassroots co-operation.

The destruction of over 60 hectares of dagga in Nyonyane marks one of the largest anti-drug operations in the region this year and underscores the police service’s unwavering stance against drug-related crimes.



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DI Grow Green serves to revitalize the growth of roots, stem and leaves. DI Grow Red is applied at flowering stage for strong flowering and seed setting

DI Grow Green for both Crops and Livestock

DI Grow Green is used for as a foliar fertilizer for all crops and all livestock. It contain chelated and balanced nutrients. Contents DI Grow Green, of both macro nutrients and trace elements (mg/L) are as follows:

Nitrogen (N) 3.1%	Copper (Cu) 0.03%
Phosphorus (P) 2.9(%)	Zinc (Zn) 0.07%
Potassium (K) 3.0%	Boron (B) 0.02%
Magnesium (Mg) 0.3%	Molybdenum (Mo) 0.002%
Iron (Fe) 867 ppm	Humic Acid 0.68%
Manganese (Mn) 223 ppm	

DI Grow Red for crops

DI Grow Red is only used for plants, at the beginning of floriation (flowering). This fertilizer improves the quality of flowering and fruition. Nutrient content of DI Grow Red is as follows:

Nitrogen (N) 3.1%	Copper (Cu) 0.03%
Phosphorus (P) 2.9(%)	Zinc (Zn) 0.07%
Potassium (K) 4.3%	Boron (B) 0.02%
Magnesium (Mg) 0.3%	Molybdenum (Mo) 76ppm
Iron (Fe) 742 ppm	Humic Acid 0.68%
Manganese (Mn) 587ppm	



CEN Liquid Fertilizers

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- Improves growth, flowering and seed setting after fertilization
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- Improves flavour and colour of yielding units

CEM Liquid Fertilizers

CEM feedstuff has been developed from natural are amino acids of plant origin that have been programmed by natural methods of cellular biology. The feed has no hormones, steroids nor stimulants. CEM contains essential amino acids, and nourishment provided by the feedstuff has the following effect:

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- leaching losses of nutrients and water is reduced.
- evapotranspiration losses are reduced.

More disqualified as Army tightens recruitment rules at Nhlambeni

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) recruitment exercise at Nhlambeni Constituency has once again underscored the strict vetting standards applied by the army, as the number of disqualified candidates far outweighed those who successfully qualified to take part in the recruitment race.

According to army officials on the ground, the majority of those turned away were not genuine residents of Nhlambeni Constituency, a requirement outlined in the recruitment guidelines. The exercise, which took place on Monday, required all aspiring recruits to present their National Identity documents, a move that made verification swift and efficient.

"The rules are clear; this stage of recruitment is strictly reserved for candidates originating from Nhlambeni who are below the age of 35. Unfortunately, most of those who were disqualified failed



▲ The people who were disqualified in the Army recruitment drive at Nhlambeni Inkhundla standing outside the gate.

this primary requirement," explained one official.

Despite the large turnout, the strict vetting meant that only a limited number of hopefuls proceeded to the physical recruitment race

on Tuesday. Those who made the cut were the few who satisfied the residency and age requirements, reflecting the army's zero-tolerance stance on attempts to bypass procedures.

Observers noted that the disqualifications did not dampen the spirit of the event, as the atmosphere remained charged with excitement and anticipation. The UEDF has made it clear that every constituency will have its turn, ensuring fairness and inclusivity for young people across the Kingdom.

The Nhlambeni recruitment is part of the ongoing national exercise aimed at giving young Emaswati the chance to serve their country while promoting discipline, patriotism, and community representation within the army ranks.

Army Commander General Masotja Dlamini has previously stressed that the recruitment process is designed not only to identify the fittest and most capable candidates but also to ensure that representation reflects all corners of Eswatini.

With the exercise continuing across constituencies, the UEDF has urged young people to prepare adequately and to observe honesty in the process. For many, the recruitment drive represents not just an opportunity for employment but a chance to proudly serve their nation.

Nhlambeni MP disputes recruitment candidate origins ... Sihlangu player disqualified before race

By Thokozani Mazibuko

TENSIONS flared during Tuesday's army recruitment exercise at Nhlambeni as the area's Member of Parliament (MP), Manzi Zwane, publicly questioned the legitimacy of the successful candidates, alleging that many of them were not from the constituency.

Addressing the crowd shortly after the recruitment race, MP Zwane expressed dissatisfaction, insisting that the event had been reserved for young people who originate specifically from Nhlambeni.

"These people are not from Nhlambeni and they don't even know me," Zwane charged. "This recruitment exercise was supposed to be attended and won by the people who originate from Nhlambeni, not other constituencies."

The recruitment process, however, had already passed through a vetting stage conducted by the army to ensure that only eligible candidates participated. National identity documents were used during this stage to verify constituency of origin, age, and other requirements.

Responding to Zwane's discontent, Army Commander General Masotja Dlamini moved swiftly to calm the situation, affirming that the process had been transparent and final.

"We were all here when these people were vetted and we went past that phase. They then underwent the recruitment race. It is final now, and there is no other way; we cannot disqualify them now," General Dlamini emphasized.

Observers noted that the recruitment pro-



▲ Nhlambeni MP Manzi Zwane.

cess had already eliminated several hopefuls during the vetting stage, including one well-known figure, a Sihlangu Semnikati national team player who was disqualified before the physical recruitment race began.

The incident has raised questions among community members about how constituency-based recruitment exercises are managed, with concerns that favoritism and strict geographic criteria could undermine broader national interests in strengthening the army.

While MP Zwane has vowed to revisit the matter, the army leadership has made it clear that the results of the recruitment stand and will not be reversed.

For now, the newly selected recruits, regardless of their constituency origin, are set to proceed with the next stages of their military journey, even as the debate over local representation in national opportunities continues.



▲ Mhlelisi Gama, Simphiwe Nkambule, and Sisana Thandiwe Mncina posing for a picture.

Unemployed youth make it in Army recruitment exercise

By Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) recruitment exercise continues to draw excitement across the Kingdom as young men and women grab the opportunity to serve their country.

On Tuesday, the Nhlambeni Constituency witnessed a large turnout, with over 100 hopefuls putting their strength, discipline, and determination to the test.

Among those who successfully passed the rigorous stages at Nhlambeni were two young men, Mhlelisi Gama (23) and Simphiwe Nkambule (23), both from Nhlambeni. Their designated reserve is Nkhsiyabonga Dlamini (25), also from the same constituency.

On the female side, Sisana Thandiwe Mncina (29) and Metiso Winisile (25), both hailing from Kashali, secured their places, with Tanele Magongo (26) from Edwaleni standing as their reserve.

Speaking during the exercise, UEDF Commander General Masotja Dlamini explained the importance of the reserve list in the recruitment process. "If it happens that the

first two candidates fail in the next stage of the recruitment, their reserves will be called to replace them. This ensures that every constituency has equal representation and that deserving young people are given the chance to join the defence force," he said.

The Nhlambeni recruitment attracted a high number of youths, highlighting the continued interest among Emaswati in pursuing careers in national service. The exercise tested candidates through a series of demanding drills, designed to identify only the most physically fit and mentally resilient recruits.

The UEDF has emphasized that recruitment will continue across all constituencies of the Kingdom, ensuring that no aspiring candidate is left behind. General Dlamini noted that the exercise forms part of the broader national drive to strengthen the army while creating opportunities for young people to contribute meaningfully to the country's security and development.

It is worth mentioning that for many of the participants, the recruitment offers more than just employment; it is a pathway to serving the nation with honor and discipline. It should be noted that the excitement witnessed in Nhlambeni reflects the growing enthusiasm among young people to "try their luck" as the army opens its doors to new talent across Eswatini.

FMD clampdown as 5 arrested for transporting slaughtered cows

Stories By Delisa Magagula

THE Ministry of Agriculture has confirmed the arrest of five men from Ekukhanyeni who were found transporting slaughtered cattle amid the country's fight against the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). The arrests come as government intensifies efforts to contain the outbreak, which has already disrupted livestock movement and placed the beef industry under heavy restrictions. Officials said transporting cattle or beef products without proper clearance poses a serious threat to national biosecurity and un-

dermines on-going containment measures. "The situation requires maximum cooperation from communities. We cannot afford to compromise food security and the agricultural economy by allowing illegal movement of livestock or meat," said Minister of Agriculture, Mandla Tshawuka. The suspects are expected to face prosecution for contravening FMD-related regulations, with the ministry warning that further arrests will follow as enforcement operations widen across the country. FMD, which is highly contagious among cloven-hoofed animals, has already forced Eswatini to suspend certain exports and restrict livestock auctions. The illegal slaughter and sale of meat remains one of the biggest risks to spreading disease across regions.



▲ Minister of Agriculture Mandla Tshawuka.

Poultry industry secures local market amid AGOA tensions

WHILE the cattle sector struggles with disease control, Eswatini's poultry farmers have emerged as one of the bright spots in agriculture. Unlike other African nations grappling with trade concessions under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Eswatini's poultry industry remains largely insulated from international disputes. Proposals in on-going AGOA negotiations have shaken the poultry industry in South Africa, where farmers are fighting against concessions that could open the floodgates for American chicken imports including controversial chlorine-washed poultry. Industry groups there warn such imports would devastate the local broiler industry and ripple into the broader agricultural value chain. Eswatini, however, has managed to sidestep these tensions by reaching near full self-sufficiency in fresh broiler meat. "Eswatini achieved self-sufficiency in fresh broiler chicken meat, resulting in the cessation of its importation several years ago," Minister Tshawuka confirmed. "What remains on the shelves from South

Africa are processed poultry products such as smoked, frozen, or marinated portions. These are still imported due to limited local processing capacity," added the Minister. The minister said government is actively driving investment into abattoirs and processing facilities to cut reliance even further. Worth mentioning, is that in first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, local broiler production recorded strong growth. Smallholder farmers alone produced and sold 706.87 metric tons of meat, generating an income of over E49 million. The ministry has set an ambitious target of 150 000 MT. Training and extension support have also expanded. In just four months: This progress has ensured a steady supply of fresh chicken while protecting Eswatini's farmers from the volatile politics of international trade. Despite its poultry success, Eswatini continues to grapple with grain deficits. The country consumes 140 000 MT of maize annually, but current production is estimated at only 73 638 MT. To close the gap, Eswatini will need to import about 66 363 MT.

Govt allocates over 100ha of land in Ndzevane

... To ease Malindza Refugee Centre congestion

THE Government has allocated over 100 hectares of land in Ndzevane to support the decongestion of the Malindza Refugee Reception Centre and promote sustainable livelihoods for both refugees and local community members. The initiative was highlighted during a courtesy call by World Vision Eswatini's National Director, Amos Zaindi, on the incoming U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires, Marc A. Weinstock, at the Embassy offices in Ezulwini. The two parties discussed practical, 'win-win' solutions for communities and the private sector, reaffirming their commitment to collaboration. Previous joint efforts between World Vision Eswatini and the U.S. Embassy include the PEPFAR/USAID-funded HIV Prevention and Mental Health initiatives targeted at adolescent girls and young women, as well as the Refugee Project implemented by World Vision with support from the Julia Taft Fund and the UNHCR. Zaindi noted that the Ndzevane land allocation marked an opportunity to cre-

ate a self-sustaining livelihoods model that would benefit both refugees and surrounding communities. "Our model is that of transforming communities, working together with the Government and other partners, through complementary resourcing," said Zaindi. He added that World Vision Eswatini has just finalised its new five-year strategy, focusing on priority areas including access to water, youth skills development, improved livelihoods, and inclusive financing. Also present at the meeting were the Embassy's Political Economic Officer, Allen Hodges, and World Vision Eswatini's Operations Director, Sakhile Dlamini. The Ndzevane initiative forms part of broader efforts to ensure that refugees are not only relocated but also empowered through access to land, skills, and markets. By embedding a business model approach, the programme aims to strengthen food security, create income opportunities, and foster peaceful integration between refugees and host communities.



▲ National Director Amos Zaindi (2nd left) with Charge d'Affaires Marc A. Weinstock (2nd right) and other officials at the US Embassy offices in Ezulwini.



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BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Elmtln fine, jail time for counterfeiting banknotes

THE Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has issued a strong warning to the public against the deliberate mutilation and counterfeiting of banknotes and coins, reminding citizens and businesses that such actions carry heavy penalties under national law. According to the Bank, deliberately damaging or mutilating currency is a criminal offence.

Some PepsiCo investors cautious of Elliott's plan to spin out bottling

NEW YORK — Some investors in PepsiCo support suggestions by activist shareholder Elliott Investment Management that the global food and beverage company cut costs and ditch sleepy brands like Quaker, but sound more cautious about the hedge fund's boldest idea - to hive off the soda maker's bottling network. Elliott has said the move, which mirrors actions taken by Coca-Cola nearly a decade ago, would increase PepsiCo's margins.

SA rand stays in tight range against dollar

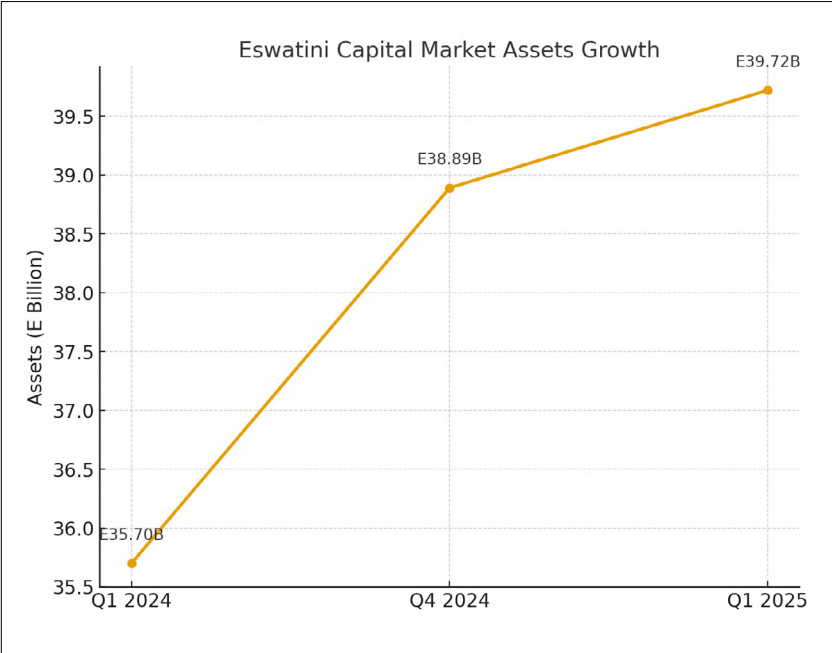
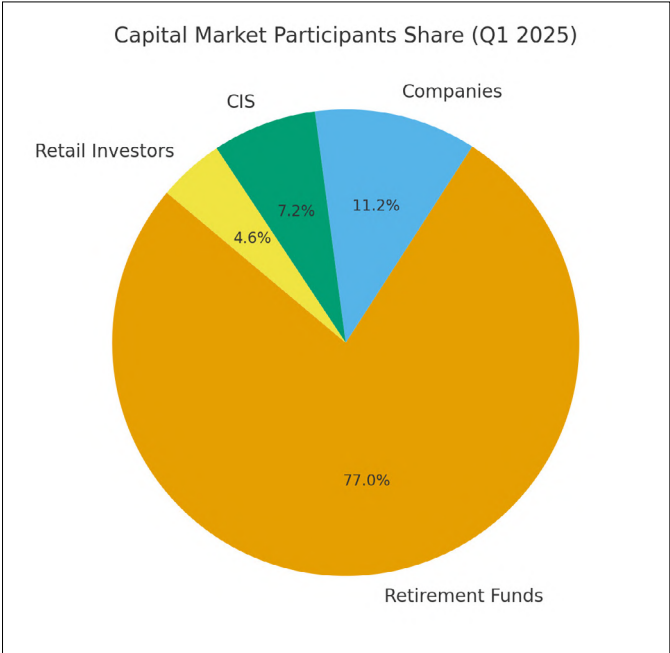
JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand was flat on Tuesday, extending a two-week period of stability against the dollar as investors waited for local drivers to emerge. At 0815 GMT the rand traded at 17.3275 against the dollar, compared with Monday's closing level of 17.3325. "Not much appears to be moving the rand at the moment. The dollar's movements have been largely ignored, leaving the rand to trade in a tight range," ETM Analytics said in a research note.

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.8986	17.3664
G.B. Pound	22.7960	23.4747
EURO	19.9685	20.5779
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90/Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	

Eswatini capital markets hit E39 billion mark



By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI'S capital markets broke through the E39 billion barrier in the first quarter of 2025, setting a record and highlighting the resilience of the financial sector in an uncertain global climate.

The latest Quarterly Statistical Report from the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) shows that total capital market assets surged to E39.72 billion, up from E38.89 billion in the previous quarter and E35.70 billion in the same period last year.

That translates into a 2.14 per cent increase quarter-on-quarter and an 11.28 per cent jump year-on-year, cementing the upward trajectory that has defined the past 12 months.

The report attributes the rally to a confluence of factors: stronger performance on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), rising global gold prices, and the appreciation of the South African Rand against the US dollar.

"Positive movements in South African equities yielded solid returns for asset managers, particularly in equity portfolios," the FSRA stated.

Beyond the headline figure, the report points to a notable shift in geographical allocation. Domestic market investment climbed to 41.54 per cent, up from 39.64 per cent the previous quarter. Allocations to both the Common Monetary Area and offshore markets slipped slightly, underscoring an increasing appetite for local assets.

Market analysts view this as a vote of confidence in Eswatini's investment environment.

While South Africa's financial markets remain the dominant external driver, the tilt back toward local allocations suggest fund managers are finding opportunities at home.

As in previous quarters, retirement funds remained the backbone of the capital markets, commanding 73.43 per cent of total assets. This dominance underscores the sector's critical role in mobilising savings and providing long-term investment stability.

Local companies followed with 10.7 per cent,

while collective investment schemes (CIS) accounted for 6.88 per cent and retail investors 4.35 per cent.

The rise in retail participation, although modest in overall share, reflects a growing interest among ordinary investors in capital markets.

The CIS segment edged higher, growing 0.07 per cent to reach E8.92 billion. Retail investors led the way, with funds swelling by 11.37 per cent, while short-term insurers boosted holdings by 10.38 per cent.

Among CIS managers, Stanlib extended its lead, commanding 47.38 per cent of the market. African Alliance trailed with 41.63 per cent, while Old Mutual held 10.20 per cent.

Stanlib's gain came largely on the back of retail investor activity, while African Alliance experienced a dip due to reduced SACCO allocations.

The report also tracked assets under advisory, which rose 2.75 per cent to E30.80 billion during the quarter. Retirement funds once again dominated with 82.08 per cent, although their share was slightly lower than the previous quarter. Companies contributed 8.63 per cent, while CIS added 6.05 per cent.

The advisory market remains highly concentrated. Stanlib leads with 44.11 per cent, followed by Inhlonhla at 14.13 per cent and Old Mutual at 11.10 per cent.

The FSRA highlighted how the broader market's performance was buoyed by external tailwinds. The JSE's rally, supported by commodity prices and a stronger Rand, provided a solid lift for portfolios exposed to South African equities.

Gold, long regarded as a safe-haven asset, also played a crucial role. Prices remained el-

evated as global investors sought stability amid geopolitical and economic uncertainty.

For Eswatini, where pension and investment funds often hold gold-linked assets through JSE exposure, the effect was significant.

While the numbers tell a story of resilience, the FSRA stressed the bigger picture, capital markets are increasingly vital in mobilising domestic savings and channelling funds into productive investments. The steady rise in both assets under management and advisory signals a sector that is not only growing but also deepening its role in the economy.

"Retirement funds continue to shape the performance of the industry," the FSRA said, noting that their long-term orientation supports stability even in volatile conditions.

The first quarter of 2025 paints a picture of strength, but risks remain. Global financial markets continue to grapple with inflationary pressures, shifting interest rates, and geopolitical tensions.

Currency movements, while favourable this quarter, could easily swing in the opposite direction. Still, the milestone of surpassing E39 billion sets a powerful tone for the rest of the year.

For investors, policymakers, and fund managers alike, the achievement is more than a number: it is a signal that Eswatini's capital markets can weather storms and still push boundaries.

With retirement funds anchoring growth, retail investors stepping up, and local allocations gaining ground, the sector enters the remainder of 2025 with momentum on its side.

Whether that momentum will carry the market beyond the E40 billion mark is now the question.



E1mln fine, jail time for counterfeiting banknotes

By Delisa Magagula

THE Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has issued a strong warning to the public against the deliberate mutilation and counterfeiting of banknotes and coins, reminding citizens and businesses that such actions carry heavy penalties under national law.

According to the Bank, deliberately damaging or mutilating currency is a criminal offence. Offenders may face a minimum sentence of six months imprisonment or a fine of E10,000.

The Bank stressed that these measures are intended to preserve the integrity of the country's currency and safeguard confidence in the financial system.

"Cash remains a critical medium of exchange in Eswatini, and its protection is a matter of national importance. Every banknote and coin are the property of the state and damaging or destroying it deliberately is an offence punishable by law," the CBE statement said.

The Bank further highlighted that the penalties for counterfeiting are far more severe.



▲ Counterfeiting currency can attract fines of up to E1 million.

Anyone found guilty of manufacturing or distributing counterfeit currency can face fines of up to E1 million, in addition to lengthy prison sentences.

The CBE stated that counterfeit currency not only undermines public trust in mon-

ey but also disrupts business transactions, threatens financial stability, and places unnecessary costs on both businesses and consumers.

"Counterfeiting is a direct attack on the economy. It erodes confidence, impacts

businesses that unknowingly accept fake money, and places a burden on the financial system," the Bank warned.

The Central Bank urged retailers, service providers, and the public to exercise vigilance when handling cash.

Businesses were advised to regularly train staff on how to identify counterfeit notes and to use available detection tools.

Consumers, meanwhile, are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the security features embedded in Eswatini's banknotes and coins. These include watermarks, metallic threads, holograms, and distinctive textures.

The Bank advised the public to report any suspected counterfeit currency immediately to the police or the Central Bank.

The CBE emphasized that maintaining public trust in Lilangeni is vital for economic stability.

Currency management is not only about circulation and replacement but also about ensuring that every note and coin in the economy is genuine, secure, and respected as legal tender.

"By protecting our banknotes and coins, we protect our economy. The penalties for mutilation and counterfeiting exist to preserve confidence in our money, which underpins all trade and investment in the country," the statement concluded.

By Delisa Magagula

THE Kingdom of Eswatini has submitted its Third Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), strengthening its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement and aligning them with national development priorities.

Eswatini has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2.24 MtCO₂e in 2035 compared to the Business as Usual (BAU) scenario, representing a 115% increase in ambition from its previous NDC 2.0 target.

Officials describe the move as both a climate milestone and an opportunity to foster sustainable economic growth.

The NDC 3.0 was developed through a highly consultative process that included government, private sector, civil society, academia, and communities.

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of incorporating the voices of women, youth, and vulnerable groups.

"This was a country-driven process, designed to reflect the realities of emaSwati while meeting international standards," the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs stated through a statement.

A major innovation in NDC 3.0 is the just transition framework, which ensures that the move to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy is equitable and inclusive.

The framework stresses the need to protect jobs, reskill workers, support rural communities, and create opportunities in green industries.

The enhanced NDC opens opportunities

Eswatini submits ambitious NDC 3.0 to UNFCCC

... 115% increase from its previous NDC 2.0



▲ Stakeholders during one of the consultative meetings on the Third Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

for investment in renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forestry, and waste management.

Eswatini's growing capital markets and financial sector are expected to play a role in financing green projects, while the international community may provide additional climate finance.

Officials note that aligning with NDC priorities can help local businesses access funding, strengthen competitiveness, and enter new markets focused on sustainability.

The government emphasizes the importance of mobilising climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity building to meet the new targets.

Partnerships with multilateral agencies, private investors, and development banks will be key to unlocking resources and expertise.

NDC 3.0 is part of Eswatini's broader vision to build resilience against climate risks while stimulating inclusive growth.

"We are building a climate agenda that

works for all emaSwati and strengthens the foundations of our economy," officials said.

Challenges remain, including access to finance, technical capacity, and global economic uncertainty. However, the submission of NDC 3.0 positions Eswatini as a committed player in global climate action.

With its ambitious targets and inclusive framework, the Kingdom has signalled that climate action is not only an environmental obligation but also a pathway to a sustainable and resilient economy.

Some PepsiCo investors cautious of Elliott's plan to spin out bottling

By Jessica DiNapoli and Svea Herbst-Bayliss

NEW YORK — Some investors in PepsiCo support suggestions by activist shareholder Elliott Investment Management that the global food and beverage company cut costs and ditch sleepy brands like Quaker, but sound more cautious about the hedge fund's boldest idea - to hive off the soda maker's bottling network.

Elliott has said the move, which mirrors actions taken by Coca-Cola nearly a decade ago, would increase PepsiCo's margins, allow the \$200 billion company to focus on new chips and sodas and turn it into a simpler, more-focused organization.

Earlier this month, Elliott unveiled a \$4 billion stake in PepsiCo - one of its largest investments- and released a 75-page report with ideas on how to boost profit at the company, whose share price has tumbled nearly 20 per cent in the last year, underperforming a 2 per cent fall in the broader S&P consumer staples index.

The maker of Mountain Dew, Gatorade, Lay's, Doritos, Cheetos and many other brands should start looking at spinning off its bottling business in the coming months,



▲ Cans of Pepsi are seen at the PepsiCo Walkers factory in Leicester, Britain.

according to Elliott's presentation. But in the near term it must first improve its beverages business which has lost ground to rivals like Keurig Dr Pepper's Dr. Pepper, the hedge fund said in a letter to the company's board on September 2.

However, three long-term investors said that separating bottling is costly and could take years, further weighing on PepsiCo's margins and earnings over that time.

"It seems unlikely that the current management team has the readiness to refran-

chise," said Kai Lehmann, portfolio manager at Flossbach von Storch, one of PepsiCo's top 30 shareholders, who agreed the move looks attractive at first sight but said it would hurt margins for some time.

Elliott and PepsiCo are having ongoing conversations about Elliott's proposal, said a source close to the matter who was not authorized to publicly speak about it.

PepsiCo said it maintains an active dialogue with shareholders and that it will review Elliott's presentation.

Elliott said in its presentation that operating margins in PepsiCo's North American beverage business trail Coca-Cola's by as much as 10 percentage points, which the company could recoup if it refranchised. PepsiCo's operating margins were 14 per cent last year, up from 13.1 per cent in 2023. Coke reported operating margins of 21.2 per cent and 24.7 per cent for the same time periods.

New York-based PepsiCo, whose name-sake cola is the second-largest soda brand globally, has struggled to revive sales in the United States as consumers push back on price hikes and smaller sizes of its products.

Its shares rose more than 6 per cent when Elliott revealed its position on September 2 but have since lost all gains and are down more than 10 per cent since then.

Elliott declined to comment. (Reuters)

Wall Street futures hold steady after tech-fueled rally; Powell in focus

By Ahmad Ghaddar

U.S. stock index futures were largely unchanged on Tuesday after a tech-driven rally drove Wall Street to record closing highs for the third straight session, while investors awaited Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's remarks on the economy.

Powell's comments could be crucial to shaping interest rate expectations at a time when traders are weighing conflicting signals from the Fed, with some officials arguing for measured cuts going forward to keep inflation in check.

Newly appointed Fed Governor Stephen Miran, however, said on Monday that the central bank risks over-tightening and harming the labour market if it holds back, highlighting the tightrope the Fed faces in balancing inflation against labour market pressures.

"We don't really just have a clean recovery path from the inflation highs of 2022, because we've gotten the shock of tariffs that are basically occurring right when you would have expected to be getting closer to that 2 per cent target," said Michael Reynolds, vice president, investment strategy at Glenmede. "Right now, it seems like it's the labour market that has the greater risk."

A September reading of S&P Global's flash manufacturing PMI is due after markets open. Comments from Fed Governor Michelle Bowman and Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic will also be parsed.

At 6:57 a.m. ET, Dow E-minis were up 33



▲ Traders work on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City, U.S.

points, or 0.07 per cent, S&P 500 E-minis were down 3 points, or 0.04 per cent, and Nasdaq 100 E-minis were mostly unchanged.

Wall Street has rallied so far in September, a historically weak month for equities, with the S&P 500 index recording a 3.6 per cent lift as tenacious traders navigate uncertainties around President Donald Trump's policies.

Part of the resilience can be traced to strength in technology stocks and renewed optimism around artificial intelligence-linked trading. Some analysts have, however, raised concerns of stretched stock valuations.

Nvidia slipped 0.7 per cent in premarket trading on Tuesday after hitting an intraday record high in the previous session. The AI chip leader agreed to a tie-up with OpenAI to invest up to \$100 billion in and supply it with data centre chips.

Investors will also be watching for poten-

tial disruptions from H-1B visa regulations, particularly in U.S. technology companies that rely heavily on skilled workers from India and China. So far, mega-cap stocks have largely shrugged off those worries.

Kenvue the maker of Tylenol that was spun off from Johnson & Johnson in 2023, rose 5.7 per cent premarket, rebounding from a 7.5 per cent plunge that made it the top laggard on the S&P 500 index on Monday.

Trump on Monday linked autism to childhood vaccine use and the taking of popular pain medication Tylenol by women when pregnant.

Boeing gained 2.8 per cent before the bell after securing an order from Uzbekistan Airways worth over \$8 billion, while talks for a Chinese order were ongoing.

Lam Research fell 1.2 per cent after KeyBanc downgraded the chipmaking tools supplier's rating to "sector weight" from "overweight". (Reuters)



▲ A South African Rand coin.

SA rand stays in tight range against dollar

JOHANNESBURG — The South African rand was flat on Tuesday, extending a two-week period of stability against the dollar as investors waited for local drivers to emerge.

At 0815 GMT the rand traded at 17.3275 against the dollar, compared with Monday's closing level of 17.3325.

"Not much appears to be moving the rand at the moment. The dollar's movements have been largely ignored, leaving the rand to trade in a tight range," ETM Analytics said in a research note.

A business cycle indicator that gauges the outlook for the South African economy increased 0.9 per cent month on month in July, central bank data showed on Tuesday, though that did little to move the rand.

Other domestic data releases this week include the producer price index and a central bank report on economic trends in the second quarter.

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange's Top-40 index was last up 0.2 per cent.

The benchmark 2035 government bond was slightly weaker, as the yield rose 2 basis points to 9.135 per cent. (Reuters)

THERE’S a classic Simpsons episode in which the sly businessman Mr. Burns recruits real Major League Baseball players to join his company softball team in order to win a bet. But when the championship is on the line, Mr. Burns pulls eight-time National League all-star Darryl Strawberry for a substitute, Homer Simpson.

“You’re a left-hander, and so is the pitcher. If I send up a right-handed batter, it’s called playing the percentages,” Mr. Burns says to Strawberry. “It’s what smart managers do to win ballgames.”

High-level baseball is very mathematically-driven, with teams hiring dozens of data engineers to study granular statistics that can inform managerial decisions. But like Mr. Burns in that Simpsons episode, it’s tempting to overanalyze baseball statistics to the point of absurdity.

The Oakland Ballers, an independent Pioneer League baseball team, took that concept of “playing the percentages” to the next level: they let an AI manage the team for a game.

The Ballers were founded by edtech entrepreneur Paul Freedman as a salve to the departure of the beloved Oakland A’s, the Major League baseball team that owner John Fisher ripped away from local fans in what’s regarded as one of the most insidious managerial moves in sports history. Though they’re not a Major League team, the Oakland Ballers – coily, the Oakland B’s – established an unprecedented national community of fans who rallied around the team in protest of the A’s departure. After just two seasons, the Ballers just won Oakland’s first baseball title since 1989.

“The Oakland Ballers uniquely have the experience of being like a major league team in a minor league market,” Freedman told TechCrunch. “We can have creative flexibil-

The Oakland Ballers let an AI manage the team

... What could go wrong?

ity. We can play with things and experiment with things way before the MLB or NBA or any of those leagues could do something.”

Minor league baseball organizations are often called upon to test new technology before it gets implemented in the majors, like challenging calls with instant replay footage or the automated ball-strike system. The Ballers embraced this attitude, especially given Freedman’s own background in tech, but have added in a dash of whimsy, piloting

things that would never actually debut in Major League Baseball.

Last year, this meant partnering with Fan Controlled Sports to let fans make managerial decisions during one late season game. The Ballers ended up losing that game, in part because fans advocated for the funniest possible managerial decisions, rather than the savviest – at one point, the fans called upon a pitcher to pinch hit.

This time around, once the team clinched their postseason berth, the Ballers partnered with the AI company Distillery to commission AI software that could manage a baseball game in real time.

“Baseball is the perfect place to do an initial experiment like this, because it is so data-driven, and decisions are made very analytically,” Freedman told TechCrunch. “You have the pace to be able to do something literally after every pitch.”

Distillery trained OpenAI’s ChatGPT on over a century’s worth of baseball data and analytics, including Ballers games, to approximate what decisions Ballers manager Aaron Miles would make.

“What the AI did was figure out what our human coach would have done – the ingenuity on strategy and the concepts came from [Miles], and the ability to use the data and recognize patterns... is what the AI did throughout the course of the game,” Freedman said. “So I think the role of human ingenuity is safe for now, and AI is a tool to be deployed to optimize decisions, but not to make them.”
(TechCrunch)



Facebook is getting an AI dating assistant

META announced on Monday that it’s bringing an AI assistant to Facebook Dating.

This chatbot is intended to help users find matches who are more closely tailored to what they are looking for. For example, Meta might suggest users ask it to find “a Brooklyn girl in tech” or a user could ask the AI to help refine their profile.

Meta also says that it’s “helping people avoid swipe fatigue” with a new feature called Meet Cute, which gives users a weekly “surprise match” chosen based on its algorithm.

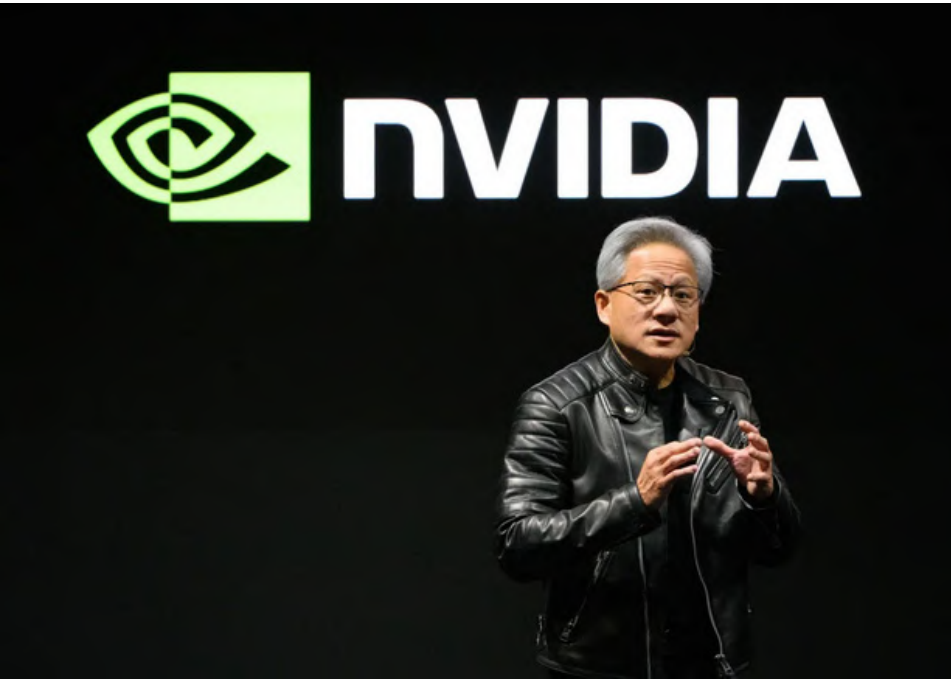
The company says Facebook Dating matches among adults ages 18 to 29 have increased 10% year-over-year growth, with hundreds of

thousands of users in that age group creating Facebook Dating profiles each month. That’s small compared to competitors like Tinder, which has about 50 million daily active users, and Hinge’s 10 million daily active users.

AI features have already become the norm in mainstream dating apps. Even newer dating apps like Sitch have attempted to differentiate themselves with their AI features.

Match Group — the owner of Tinder, Hinge, OKCupid, and others — entered a partnership with OpenAI last year, which is part of the dating giant’s \$20 million-plus investment in AI. That’s a big bet, especially given the financial struggles of Match Group, which has lost about 68% of its stock price in the last five years.

(TechCrunch)



▲ Nvidia CEO Huang Jen-hsun.

Nvidia plans to invest up to \$100B in OpenAI

NVIDIA announced Monday it plans to invest up to \$100 billion in OpenAI as part of a deal to build out massive data centers for training and running AI models.

The companies say they signed a letter of intent to deploy 10 gigawatts — enough to power millions of homes — worth of Nvidia systems to power OpenAI’s next generation of AI infrastructure.

The deal may help OpenAI as it reduces its reliance on Microsoft, its largest investor and supplier of cloud computing resources. In January, Microsoft announced changes to its partnership with OpenAI, allowing

the ChatGPT maker to build additional AI infrastructure with other partners. Since then, OpenAI has teamed up with various partners on AI data center projects, such as Stargate. Nvidia says the deal will complement existing partnerships OpenAI has, including agreements with Microsoft, Oracle, and SoftBank.

OpenAI says it will work with Nvidia as a “preferred strategic compute and networking partner” for its AI factory growth. It’s unclear whether Nvidia’s investment will be paid out in chips, cloud credits, cash, or otherwise.

(TechCrunch)



▲ This chatbot is intended to help users find matches who are more closely tailored to what they are looking for.

THE military-led West African countries Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have announced their withdrawal from the International Criminal Court, denouncing it as “a tool of neocolonial repression.”

The announcement, in a joint statement published on Monday, is the latest example of diplomatic upheaval in West Africa’s Sahel region following eight coups between 2020 and 2023.

The three countries, which are ruled by military officers, have already split from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS and formed a body known as the Alliance of Sahel States. They have also curbed defence cooperation with Western powers and sought closer ties with Russia.

Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have been members of the ICC, located in The Hague, for more than two decades. But their statement said they viewed the court as incapable of prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and genocide. It did not specify examples of where the countries believed the ICC had fallen short.

The three countries are battling Islamist militant groups that control large swathes of territory and have staged frequent attacks on military installations this year.

Human Rights Watch and other groups have accused the militants as well as the militaries and partner forces of Burkina Faso and Mali of possible atrocity crimes.

In April, United Nations experts said the

Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger announce exit from International Criminal Court

alleged summary execution of several dozen civilians by Malian forces may amount to war crimes. The ICC has had an investigation open in Mali since 2013 over alleged war crimes committed primarily in the northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, which had fallen under militant control. Later that year, France intervened to push back the insurgents.

(Reuters)

“Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have been members of the ICC, located in The Hague, for more than two decades. But their statement said they viewed the court as incapable of prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and genocide”

”



▲ The three countries, which are ruled by military officers, have already split from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS and formed a body known as the Alliance of Sahel States.

Guinea voters endorse post-coup constitution, partial results show

VOTERS in Guinea have overwhelmingly backed a new constitution that could allow coup leader Mamady Doumbouya to run for president if he chose to, according to partial results released late on Monday.

The constitution looked set to pass with 90.6% votes in favour and 9.4% against, Djenabou Toure, head of Guinea’s General Directorate of Elections, told reporters. Those figures were based on roughly 91% of votes cast in the referendum.

An overall figure for voter turnout was not available, but officials had counted more than 4.8 million votes out of more than 6.6 million registered voters, meaning turnout had exceeded 70%.

Doumbouya seized power in Guinea, home to the world’s largest reserves of bauxite, in 2021. It was part of a wave of eight coups that swept West and Central Africa between 2020 and 2023.

A charter adopted after the coup barred members of the transitional government from seeking office.

But that language was not included in the constitution put to voters on Sunday.

While the referendum has been seen as a step towards elections and the return to civilian rule in Guinea, Doumbouya’s opponents have criticised it as a power grab by him.

Doumbouya’s government missed a December 31, 2024 deadline it had set itself for a return to civilian rule. Its presidential election is currently expected to take place in December.

Doumbouya, a 40-year-old former member of the French Foreign Legion, voted along with his wife at a health centre in Conakry on Sunday, wearing sunglasses and a baseball cap bearing a drawing of a traditional mask symbolising fertility.

(Reuters)



▲ Election officials count ballot papers in a referendum on a new Guinean constitution that could permit coup leader Mamady Doumbouya, who seized power in 2021, to run for president, in Conakry, Guinea.



▲ A general view shows people at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport ahead of a strike by Kenya airports union workers to protest against a proposed deal for India’s Adani Group.

Kenyan aviation workers give seven-day notice for strike

KENYA Aviation Workers Union on Tuesday gave seven days notice for strike action, demanding the resignation of the Kenya Airports Authority board in response to labour disputes and the fallout from a cancelled airport leasing deal.

The planned industrial action could disrupt operations at Kenya’s main international airport, one of Africa’s busiest aviation hubs.

KAWU Secretary General Moses Ndiema declined to specify when the strike would begin, saying it could start at any time after the notice period had expired.

Kenya Airports Authority did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Workers at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport held a day-long strike a year ago over concerns about a plan to lease the airport to

the Adani Group, an Indian company led by one of Asia’s richest people, billionaire Gautam Adani.

Kenya eventually scrapped the proposed deal after the United States indicted Adani and seven others for reportedly paying around \$265 million in bribes to Indian government officials, claims the Adani Group has denied.

KAWU Secretary General Moses Ndiema, in a letter dated September 23 and seen by Reuters, accused the KAA board of incompetence and failing to act in Kenya’s best interests.

“The epitome of the board’s incompetence and lack of touch with the reality is the recent events involving the Adani deal and other decisions,” Ndiema said, without specifying the duration of the strike.

(Reuters)

Trump tells western leaders ...

‘Your countries are being ruined by uncontrolled immigration’

DONALD Trump accused the United Nations of ‘funding an assault’ on the West through immigration and warned Europe is ‘going to hell’ in an astonishing address to the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

The U.S. President called for an end to ‘the failed experiment of open borders’ as he lauded the success of his own hard line immigration crackdown.

‘The United Nations is funding an assault on Western countries and their borders,’ he said during a blistering attack on the organisation before world leaders in New York City.

‘The UN is supporting people that are illegally coming into the United States,’ he said, pointing to cash support the organisation had supplied to in-need migrants.

He said the UN is supposed to protect countries from ‘invasions’ and ‘not create them and not finance them’, asserting that uncontrolled migration was the top issue of our time.

Addressing western allies he said plainly: ‘Your countries are being ruined by uncontrolled immigration’.

‘Europe is in serious trouble,’ he said by way of illustration. ‘They’ve been invaded by a force of illegal aliens like no-one has ever seen before. And nobody’s doing anything to change it, to get them out.’

‘It’s not sustainable. And because they choose to be politically correct they’re doing absolutely nothing about it.’

‘I look at London where you have a terrible mayor and it’s been so changed,’ he said, turning his attention to nemesis Sadiq Khan before falsely claiming: ‘Now they want to go to Sharia law but you’re in a different country, you can’t do that.’

Trump used the address to boast of his own accomplishments during his first term in office while criticising the efforts of the United Nations.

In a wandering address, he also took aim at European nations for continuing to buy



▲ US President Donald Trump delivers remarks to the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York City.

Russian oil and gas, adding that he would not impose sharp sanctions on Moscow over the war in Ukraine until Western allies cut off their purchases.

‘It’s embarrassing to them, and it was very embarrassing to them when I found out about it,’ he said. ‘They have to immediately cease all energy purchases from Russia. Otherwise, we’re all wasting a lot of time.’

European nations have reduced imports from Russia since the February 2022 invasion, but continue to purchase gas.

On the thread of war, Trump reiterated claims he had ended seven conflicts around

the world while criticising the United Nations for not offering assistance.

Trump has claimed responsibility for brokering peace deals between Armenia and Azerbaijan; Cambodia and Thailand; Israel and Iran; India and Pakistan; Rwanda and the DRC; Egypt and Ethiopia; and Serbia and Kosovo.

In a scathing attack, he asked: ‘What is the purpose of the United Nations?’

‘All they seem to do is write a really strongly worded letter. It’s empty words, and empty words don’t solve war.’

‘I’ve always said (the U.N.) has such

tremendous, tremendous potential, but it’s not even coming close to living up to that potential.’

Trump even complained about a broken escalator and teleprompter at the New York headquarters of the UN, which he has repeatedly targeted during both of his presidential terms.

‘This is these are the two things I got from the United Nations, a bad escalator and a bad teleprompter,’ he said.

Trump’s speech, which began without a teleprompter, digressed as he went off script.

Trump did acknowledge two major conflicts where his outreach has produced no results - Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and Israel’s war in Gaza following Hamas’s October 7, 2023 attack.

He called recognition by a slate of Washington’s allies of a Palestinian state a ‘reward’ to armed group Hamas for ‘horrible atrocities’ and urged the group to release hostages to reach peace.

While praising his own efforts to broker peace, Trump also lauded his decisions to order the U.S. military to carry out strikes on Iran and more recently against alleged drug smugglers from Venezuela.

Trump’s second term has opened with a blaze of nationalist policies curbing cooperation with the rest of the world.

He has moved to pull the United States out of the World Health Organization and the UN climate pact, severely curtailed US development assistance and wielded sanctions against foreign judges over rulings he sees as violating sovereignty.

(Daily Mail)

Hong Kong shuts down ahead of world’s biggest typhoon this year

HONG Kong shut down ahead of Super Typhoon Ragasa on Tuesday, the world’s most powerful tropical cyclone this year, with authorities urging people to stay at home, while most passenger flights were due to be suspended until Thursday.

People piled into supermarkets, leaving little on the shelves, as panic buying set in and residents stocked up on necessities for fear that shops could be closed for two days.

Windows in homes and businesses across the city were taped up, with residents hoping it could help reduce the impact of any shattered glass.

Ragasa, packing hurricane-force winds of up to 220km/h (137 mph), is posing a “severe threat to the coast of Guangdong”, the Hong Kong Observatory said, referring to the Chinese province that neighbours the financial hub.

It will maintain super typhoon intensity as it edges closer to the coast of Guangdong, and as it impacts Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan, after sweeping through the northern Philippines on Monday. It is expected to make landfall along Guangdong’s coast from midday to late Wednesday.

Guangdong authorities evacuated over 770,000 people, state broadcaster CCTV



▲ Residents walk past sandbags placed to prevent flooding from Super Typhoon Ragasa, in Hong Kong, China.

said, adding that more than one million people are expected to be relocated across the province on Tuesday.

Hong Kong issued the typhoon signal 8, its third highest at 2.20 p.m. (0620 GMT), which urges most businesses and transport services to shut down. More than 700 flights

have been disrupted, including in the neighbouring gambling hub of Macau and in Taiwan. The weather is expected to deteriorate rapidly later on Tuesday and the observatory said it will assess whether to issue a higher warning late on Tuesday or early Wednesday.

(Reuters)

Bill Gates, RFK Jr. ‘agreed to disagree’ on vaccines

PHILANTHROPIST and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has met once with U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. since he took office, and the two “agreed to disagree” about vaccines, Gates told Reuters in an interview on Monday.

Kennedy has long promoted doubts about vaccine safety and efficacy, and as health secretary, he has upended U.S. vaccine policy.

The pair met in July, Gates’ staff said. The Gates Foundation is one of the biggest global health funders, and Gates is a prominent supporter of immunizations.

“We agreed to disagree on some things about vaccines, but moved on to talk about areas that we would agree on,” said Gates.

Gates said that he was concerned, though, that skepticism on vaccines was spreading from the U.S.

“It is tragic that we see this vaccine skepticism, because even though the number of additional deaths in the rich world is likely to be modest, every life should count,” he said.

He told Reuters it was dangerous to see skepticism spreading in low-income countries particularly because for example, malnourished children are more vulnerable to measles. (Reuters)

Eemoh to rock Millennium Park

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

MANZINI is gearing up for an electrifying musical celebration as South African Amapiano sensation Eemoh prepares to headline the highly anticipated Nqakonywa Nqakithi Umswenko Spring Drop.

The event is scheduled to take place at Millennium Park on November 8, 2025. The show is set to be a vibrant showcase of Amapiano's infectious rhythms and energetic performances, running from 3 pm until late into the night. Joining Eemoh on the lineup is the acclaimed South African artist Busiswa, adding even more star power and excitement for fans eager to experience the best of contemporary Southern African music. This dynamic duo is set to deliver an unforgettable show that will captivate audiences and keep the party alive throughout the evening. Ticket prices for the event are structured to accommodate a wide range of attendees. Early bird general tickets are available at E100, while standard general admission tickets are priced at E120. For those who decide to purchase tickets at the door, the cost will be E150. VIP ticket holders will enjoy an exclusive experience for E300, offering premium access and amenities. Nqubeko Mbuliso Shangase, popularly known by his stage name Eemoh, has rapidly established himself as a powerhouse in the Amapiano music scene. Born on July 23, 1999, in Untunjambili, Kranskop, KwaZulu-Natal, his rise from a small town to regional stardom is a testament to his talent and dedication. Eemoh's music journey has been marked by collaborations with some



▲ Eemoh.

of the region's most influential artists and producers, including De Mthuda, Master KG, DJ Maphorisa, and Da Muziqal Chef.

Versatility

These partnerships have produced a series of hits that have resonated with fans across Southern Africa. Tracks like "Impumelelo," "Ithuba," and a remake

of "Dubula" have showcased Eemoh's versatility and ability to innovate within the genre. However, it is his breakout hit "Sgudi Sync" that has truly defined his career. The track's infectious beat and catchy lyrics have made it a cultural phenomenon, dominating both charts and dance floors.

Cool Drop gears up to host Emakhaya Album Pre-Party

THE vibrant music scene in Eswatini is set to be electrified as local sensation Cool Drop prepares to host the much-anticipated Emakhaya Album Pre-Party.

Scheduled for September 27, 2025, the event will take place at the popular MJ Lodge & Lifestyle in KaNcesi, promising an evening filled with dynamic performances and celebration. Alongside Cool Drop, the lineup boasts notable artists including Mr Chosen, Passion Master, True Classic, Grinder Cruise, and Eskay, ensuring a diverse and engaging musical experience for attendees. Tickets for the event are affordably priced at E50, making it accessible to a broad fan base eager to participate in this milestone occasion.

Cool Drop, a prominent figure in Eswatini's music landscape, is on the cusp of releasing his highly anticipated new album titled Emakhaya. This album represents a pivotal chapter in his artistic evolution, encapsulating a journey marked by personal growth and a wealth of life experiences that have profoundly influenced his creative expression.

Describing Emakhaya as more than a mere collection of songs, Cool Drop

emphasised that the album is a cohesive narrative exploring a spectrum of human emotions. The tracks traverse themes of struggle, perseverance, hope, and celebration, painting a vivid portrait of life's multifaceted journey. The artist's intention is for the album to resonate deeply with listeners from diverse backgrounds, particularly those in Eswatini who share similar challenges and experiences.

Creative

Musically, Emakhaya is a rich fusion of genres that highlights Cool Drop's versatility. The album seamlessly melds house, Afro-soul, hip-hop, and traditional African sounds, creating a unique blend that honours African musical heritage while embracing contemporary influences. Cool Drop stresses that authenticity remained central throughout the creative process. "I aimed to showcase versatility but also remain authentic to who I am as Cool Drop," he shared.

The album's title, Emakhaya, which translates to "at home," captures the emotional essence of the project. The songs reflect the sentiments of a man who has spent significant time away from his homeland, cultivating a deeper



▲ Cool Drop.

appreciation for the simple yet profound moments that define home. Themes of familial love, the warmth of community, and the bonds shared with a partner are woven throughout the album, inviting listeners into an intimate space of reflection and connection.



▲ Nelly Noll.

Nelly Noll to ignite IF's Lounge at Karaoke Nights

ESWATINI'S vibrant music scene is set to shine even brighter this week as celebrated local artist Nelly Noll takes centre stage at the much-anticipated Karaoke Nights event.

Scheduled for this Wednesday at IF's Lounge, the evening promises an unforgettable blend of music, laughter, and community spirit, running from 6 pm until late into the night. This edition of Karaoke Nights carries the stylish theme of "all white edition," encouraging attendees to don denim and white attire, creating a visually unified and chic atmosphere. The event has quickly become a midweek highlight in Eswatini's entertainment calendar, drawing music lovers eager to unwind and connect through song and performance.

Headlining the night is none other than Eswatini music star Nelly Noll, whose dynamic presence and vocal prowess have earned her a devoted following. Alongside her, the evening will feature the talents of Resident DJs, with Thando taking on the role of MC, ensuring the event flows smoothly and the energy remains high throughout the night.

Interview

In an exclusive interview with Mistosoul, the Entertainment Manager at IF's Lounge, he shared his enthusiasm about the ongoing success of Karaoke Nights, which is now entering its third month. "We have been receiving massive support for this mid-week concept," he said. "Our love for music and commitment to supporting local artists and musicians in the country drives us to create this platform. This event is another opportunity for us to uplift local musicians while providing our patrons with an entertaining and laid-back atmosphere where live musicians can mesmerise the audience."

Mistosoul highlighted that the event's theme is more than just a dress code; it's a way to foster a sense of unity and style among participants. "The denim and white theme adds a fashionable touch to the evening, making it not just a night of music but also a celebration of community and culture," he noted. He also emphasised the warm hospitality that IF's Lounge is known for, assuring that every guest and performer will feel welcomed and valued. "We pride ourselves on delivering the best experience for our guests, and we want every musician and DJ to shine on that night," he added.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Karaoke Nights is its inclusivity. Participation is completely free for both artists and patrons, breaking down financial barriers and encouraging a diverse range of musicians to take the stage. "We believe in creating an environment where everyone can participate and enjoy music together," Mistosoul explained.

MIXED REACTIONS AS. . .

Young Stunna defends DJ Maphorisa

AMAPIANO star Young Stunna has sparked mixed reactions after defending DJ Maphorisa against rising artist Tebogo “G” Mashego, who has accused the legendary producer of owing him millions.

This followed Mashego’s emotional breakdown during a live video on social media last week, when he alleged mistreatment during his visit to Nigeria.

In the video, he also hurled insults at DJ Maphorisa and Sony Music, claiming his team had prevented him from returning home due to contractual obligations.

“I came here with people and when we got here, they started changing. I asked them to buy me a ticket so I could return home. Now they say there’s no way I can go because they signed a contract,” Mashego said, without going into further detail.

In another video, he again alleged that the Scorpion Kings, Maphorisa and Kabza De Small owed him millions in unpaid royalties for the hit song Biri Marung.

In a lengthy social media post, Young Stunna hit back, saying industry veterans deserved respect.

He said many had saved lives through music and that young artists needed to work harder and show discipline.

“These people are older and that doesn’t give anyone the right to disrespect them,” he wrote. “They saved a lot of lives — more than the government did. Some of us live for music. It’s what we eat, breathe and spit.

...after Mashego’s social media outburst



▲ Young Stunna, Tebogo G Mashego and DJ Maphorisa.

This is not hip hop, so why are we bringing beef into amapiano?”

In a separate video, Stunna said that if Mashego wished to attack the Scorpion Kings, he should include him as well.

“If you want to say f*** him, start with us too. I’m a Scorpion Prince. These are the people who put food on my table, who make sure I’m always protected, who keep my mental stable.” Stunna’s comments drew mixed reactions online. While some praised him for defending and showing gratitude to DJ Maphorisa, others criticised him for coming for Mashego, especially since he



had also taken to social media a few weeks ago to complain about exploitation in the music industry. In a lengthy post at the time, Stunna claimed he never received his platinum plaques for Baxolele and Dlala Captain, songs released under DJ Jaivani’s Simnandi Records. He said he chose to move on without receiving an apology, despite feeling sidelined. “Those songs are so important to me, but I kept quiet and kept pushing. I am healthy now and made peace, choosing forgiveness without anyone apologising,” he wrote.

Citizen

Nobantu on the rise since ‘Khurukhutsu’ catchphrase

NOBANTU Vilakazi became a breakout star in 2021, thanks to her trademark Ad-lib “Khurukhutsu” that became a long-running catchphrase on the song Vula Mlomo by Musa Keys, featuring Sir Trill.

In the last four years, a lot has happened, and the 30-year-old musician from Meadowlands, Soweto, has grown – both musically and personally.

Vilakazi, whose new single The Help gives listeners a glimpse into her spiritual journey and an introspection on a higher power, chats to Sowetan about it:

How would you describe your evolution?

Nobantu Vilakazi (NV): [The year] 2024 was one of the toughest years of my life, both musically and personally. A lot happened, but by the grace of God, I survived. That year completely shifted my perspective on life. I had to grow fast, learn faster, and rediscover who I am – not just as an artist, but as a person. Musically, it pushed me to dig deeper into my artistry and to put more heart into every note I sing.

I’ve been surrounded by an ocean of incredible people – Kamo Mphela, DJ Zinhle, Bucie, DJ Maphorisa, Kabza De Small, Makhanj, Nia Pearl and Sibu Mabena. Being in those spaces has been humbling and inspiring because I get to learn from people who are killing the game and shaping the industry.

Who has shown you the biggest support?

NV: DBN Gogo has been such a breath of fresh air, an absolute sweetheart. From the very first day I met her, she’s been warm, supportive and genuinely invested in my growth. People like that make this journey not only bearable but exciting. My pillars in the game are DBN Gogo and Justin99.

They’ve held me down. It’s rare to find people in this industry who genuinely care, and I’m grateful to have them by my side.

Who is your dream collaborator?

NV: I would love to work with Wizkid, Sun-EL Musician and Tems. Their artistry is unmatched, and I feel like we could create something timeless together. I’m also always open to exploring new sounds with fresh talent. The possibilities are endless.

You started at 19 in 2014. How have you grown?

NV: I’ve matured so much, and being a mother has been the biggest part of that growth. Seeing the world through my son’s [Bandile] eyes empowers me and pushes me to conquer my dreams. I want to show him that everything is possible. He’s helped me carry myself with purpose – both personally and artistically – and I feel stronger, wiser, and more grounded than ever.

Tell us about your new project.



▼ Nobantu Vilakazi.



▲ Luyanda Zuma.

Miss SA 2025 Beauty Pageant:

Shaka iLembe star Luyanda Zuma one of 10 finalists

FORMER SMag cover star and Shaka iLembe actor, Luyanda Zuma, will have a second chance to be crowned Miss SA in Pretoria on October 25 after making the top 10 for the long-delayed 2025 instalment of the beauty pageant.

Zuma was a Miss SA top 10 finalist in 2022, the year that Ndavi Nokeri was crowned.

The 23-year-old from Pietermaritzburg is joined by other familiar media faces. Miss Soweto 2016, Nthabiseng Kgasi, 30, also made the top 10. Another Soweto-born finalist is Zanele Phakathi, 27, who was a top 16 contestant in 2019, the year that Zozibini Tunzi won it. Phakathi was also a Miss Soweto finalist in 2021.

Leading the pack is Gauteng with five finalists, while the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are tied second with two contestants each and the Eastern Cape with one. Zuma holds a BA in live performance from Afda and her mantra is “You are never too young to lead”. Kgasi is a marketing manager, and her motto is “Let your ‘why’ guide you every step of the way”.

Phakathi has an advanced diploma in business information technology from the University of Johannesburg and works with the enterprise architecture team at the Public Investment Corporation. She believes that “God’s timing is perfect”.

Bigger

Representing Daveyton is Nelly Mashile, 28, who obtained her medical degree in Cuba and her surgery degree from Wits University. Having first entered Miss SA in 2023, she returned to represent children from disadvantaged backgrounds. She hopes to inspire with her message of “Dream big, reality will be bigger”.

Lebo Msimanga, 27, from Empangeni, holds a BCom in economics and marketing from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She works as a client manager and professional model. Her motto is “Stick to the plan, not your mood”. Nokeri, as a judge, joined by investigative journalist Devi Sankaree Govender and broadcaster Liezel van der Westhuizen, picked the top 10 finalists.

Sowetan

Correctional Services refutes fake news on kwaito star Brickz

THE Department of Correctional Services has denied reports that Brickz, a kwaito musician, was freed from jail.

Sipho “Brickz” Ndlovu, a convicted rapist, is still incarcerated at Leeuwkop Maximum Security Prison, where he is serving a 15-year sentence.

Brickz’s release has been the subject of social media rumours.

The three countries, which are ruled by military officers, have already split from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS and formed a body known as the Alliance of Sahel States. They have also curbed defence cooperation with Western

powers and sought closer ties with Russia.

Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have been members of the ICC, located in The Hague, for more than two decades. But their statement said they viewed the court as incapable of prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and genocide. It did not specify examples of where the countries believed the ICC had fallen short.

The three countries are battling Islamist militant groups that control large swathes of territory and have staged frequent attacks on military installations this year.

Human Rights Watch and other groups have accused the militants

as well as the militaries and partner forces of Burkina Faso and Mali of possible atrocity crimes.

In April, United Nations experts said the alleged summary execution of several dozen civilians by Malian forces may amount to war crimes.

The ICC has had an investigation open in Mali since 2013 over alleged war crimes committed primarily in the northern regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal, which had fallen under militant control. Later that year, France intervened to push back the insurgents.

The Mali investigation was opened following a referral from the government at the time. (Sunday World)



▲ Sipho ‘Brickz’ Ndlovu was convicted by the Roodepoort Magistrate’s Court of raping his 16-year-old niece in 2013.

Jimmy Kimmel Live! returning Tuesday

JIMMY Kimmel Live! is set to return to the air on Tuesday. The long-running TV chat show was recently suspended following comments that Jimmy made about Charlie Kirk’s death - but the Walt Disney Company has now confirmed that it’s set to return to the air.

The company said in a statement: “Last Wednesday, we made the decision to suspend production on the show to avoid further inflaming a tense situation at an emotional moment for our country. It is a decision we made because we felt some of the comments were ill-timed and thus insensitive.

“We have spent the last days having thoughtful conversations with Jimmy, and after those conversations, we reached the decision to return the show on Tuesday.”

Jimmy was initially suspended after he suggested that Tyler Robinson, the man accused of fatally shooting Kirk at a university in Utah, was aligned to the Make America

Great Again movement.

He said in an opening monologue: “We hit some new lows over the weekend with the MAGA gang desperately trying to characterise this kid who murdered Charlie Kirk as anything other than one of them and doing everything they can to score political points from it. In between the finger-pointing, there was grieving.”

Before the show aired,

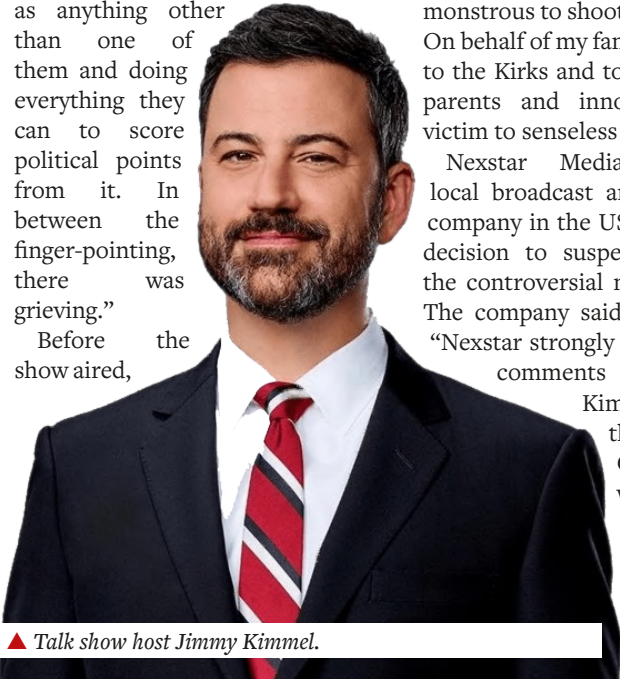
Jimmy offered his condolences to Kirk’s family.

The TV star wrote on social media at the time: “Instead of the angry finger-pointing, can we just for one day agree that it is horrible and monstrous to shoot another human? On behalf of my family, we send love to the Kirks and to all the children, parents and innocents who fall victim to senseless gun violence.”

Nexstar Media, the largest local broadcast and digital media company in the US, announced the decision to suspend Jimmy after the controversial monologue aired. The company said in a statement: “Nexstar strongly objects to recent comments made by Mr.

Kimmel concerning the killing of Charlie Kirk and will replace the show with other programming in its ABC-affiliated markets.”

(Reuters)



▲ Talk show host Jimmy Kimmel.



‘Hamba Juba’ hitmakers speak out

... millions of streams, yet no royalties received

IT never ends: artists continue to speak out about unpaid royalties.

This week, producer JL SA, real name Jackson Motla, took to social media to express frustration over not being paid for the 2023 viral hit “Hamba Juba”, a collaboration with Lady Amar, Murumba Pitch and Cici. “Did you know that I made this beat?” he asked while playing the track.

“I’ve produced this song from scratch. This is my work. This is my own production, but I never got a cent from it. You can check.”

“And if you can check now on Spotify, the song is hitting on like 23 million streams on Spotify only. The music video on YouTube has 32 million views. I have not counted the audio. My name is JL SA. I’m a South African. I love making music except that I don’t get paid for it.”

Fans flooded the comments with questions. One user asked, “Why don’t you always ask before signing any contract?”

JL SA responded, “I didn’t sign anything because there was nothing given to sign.”

Another follower asked, “What was the deal from the get-go between you guys?”

“I was promised 50% of the song,” he responded.

The conversation quickly turned toward DJ Lady Amar, with fans tagging her and accusing her of withholding money.

Amar released a video asking people to stop insulting her. She said that it has been two years and that she has not received any form of payment.

Amar said that she has been quiet because she does not know how to speak for herself, and that maybe JL SA does. She said that this is the last time she is

speaking about this issue.

Sannah Thwala, head of marketing and PR at The House of Thomm, which represents Cici, told “Independent Media Lifestyle”: “We are aware of the concerns raised by JL SA regarding the song ‘Hamba Juba’ and it is important to clarify that Cici herself has not received her share of the royalties for the song in question.”

“In addition, the House of Thomm, which owns 50% of the master, has also not received its agreed master share, despite a split sheet being signed by all parties involved prior to the release.”

Thwala added: “As per agreements, revenues from the song were to be distributed fairly among all collaborators. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, and the matter has already been referred to our legal representatives to ensure that all parties receive what is rightfully due to them.”

“At this stage, the focus is on ensuring transparency and accountability in the handling of the royalties and resolving the matter through the proper legal and professional channels. We are awaiting a date for mediation from SAMRO for the resolution of the matter.”

When asked about payment arrangements and royalty tracking, Murumba Pitch’s management distanced itself from the dispute.

“Murumba Pitch is just a feature. Please kindly text the owners of the song,” they said.

The South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) had not responded to requests for comment by the time of publication.

(IOL)



A new pilot study reports that young adults experienced a 70 per cent reduction in depression symptoms after following a ketogenic diet.

Participants also reported improvements in cognitive performance, overall well-being, and modest weight loss.

Researchers suggest that nutritional ketosis could potentially serve as an adjunctive therapy alongside medication and counseling.

However, a keto diet is not a replacement for professional mental health support, and further research is needed before keto can be recommended as a standalone treatment.

A new study from Ohio State University has found that following a ketogenic diet may help reduce depression symptoms in young adults.

The pilot trial tracked 16 college students with major depressive disorder over 10–12 weeks and found that participants experienced a roughly 70 per cent decrease in depression scores.

They also experienced improvements in overall well-being, cognitive performance, and even modest weight loss.

The 16 students who completed the pilot trial were receiving medication, counseling, or both for major depressive disorder (MDD) before beginning the keto diet.

The findings suggest that attaining nutritional ketosis through diet is a feasible adjunctive therapy for depression and pave the way for a larger clinical trial. The findings were published on September 10 in Translational Psychiatry.

Previous research has suggested that medications and counseling reduce depressive symptoms by about 50per cent in a similar time period.

“A 70 per cent drop in depression symptoms in just 10–12 weeks is impressive, especially alongside better well-being and memory, said Shelly Dar, a therapist specializing in anxiety and mood disorders. Dar wasn’t involved in the study.

“But I’d stress that this was a small pilot without a control group, so we can’t say keto caused the change,” she told Healthline.

Ketosis may improve brain function

The effects of the ketogenic diet on neurological conditions like epilepsy are well established. Therefore, the potential brain health benefits of ketosis are of increasing interest to researchers.

When the body is in a state of ketosis, the brain shifts from using glucose as its primary energy source to ketones, explained Mike Kocsis, founder of Balance My Hormones in the United Kingdom. Kocsis wasn’t involved in the new pilot study.

“Ketones act as signaling molecules that can impact brain chemistry, he told Healthline. “This metabolic trigger may improve mitochondrial efficiency, lower inflammation, and stabilize blood sugar levels, all of which are linked to mood regulation.” Ketones may also support the cycle of GABA (a calming neurotransmitter), which may help lower anxiety and regulate emotions.

“In the Ohio State study, the participants not only had lower depression scores but also showed better cognitive performance, which means overall brain function has improved,” Kocsis noted.

Keto diet may support other mental health conditions

Emerging evidence suggests a ketogenic



Keto diet and depressive disorder

diet may support other mental health conditions.

Early studies have examined the effects of the keto diet on various neurological and psychiatric conditions, including:

- schizophrenia
- ADHD
- bipolar disorder
- Parkinson’s disease
- Alzheimer’s disease

In a small 2024 study of three adults, complete remission of major depression and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) occurred within 7–12 weeks of therapeutic nutritional ketosis.

Larger studies, of course, are needed to confirm these findings.

Keto diet is not a substitute for treatment

The results of the new pilot study are certainly encouraging, but the research has some limitations.

Dar noted the findings show potential, not necessarily proof. Larger, more rigorous studies are needed before the keto diet should be recommended as a first-line treatment for depression.

“In my therapy work, I see how much clients want practical options they can control themselves, so findings like this feel encouraging, even if we need more evidence,” she added.

Still, the keto diet should not be viewed as a substitute for medication or professional help. “I see diet as an add-on, not a replacement,” Dar said.

“In the study, students kept their usual medication and counselling. That’s the safe model; we don’t want people dropping therapy or antidepressants in favor of a restrictive diet,” she continued.

According to Dar, there usually isn’t one single “fix” when it comes to treating depression.

Kocsis agreed. “Dietary interventions such as keto should be seen as complementary, not replacements, for certain treatments,” he said.

There are risks to consider, too. “Keto can be socially isolating, hard to stick to, and risky if you’ve ever struggled with disordered eating,” Dar said.

“As a therapist, I’d be mindful of the psychological impact of restrictive eating. It can either empower someone or tip them into old, unhelpful patterns,” she noted.

Getting help with depression

If you’re experiencing symptoms associated with depression, remember that you’re not alone. Reach out to your doctor or a mental health professional for support.

In some cases, counseling, therapy, medications like selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), or a

combination, may be needed.

If your doctor recommends the keto diet to complement your mental health treatment, Kocsis said to transition gradually. “Slowly start to reduce carbs over 1–2 weeks rather than cutting them overnight, as this will help minimize ‘keto-flu’ symptoms like fatigue and headaches,” he advised.

“It’s a good idea to focus on whole foods, plenty of non-starchy vegetables, healthy fats such as olive oil, nuts, and avocado, and quality protein sources to avoid nutrient gaps,” he added.

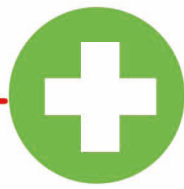
Dar noted that other, less restrictive dietary patterns, such as increasing your intake of whole foods and following a Mediterranean-style diet, have been shown to help support mood.

“What matters most is finding a sustainable routine that supports mental health without adding extra stress or pressure,” Dar said.

Diet aside, Dar said not to underestimate the power of healthy habits like good sleep, exercise, therapy, social support, and cutting back on alcohol or illicit substances.

“These are powerful tools for mood, and I’d encourage anyone to build those habits, whether or not they try keto,” she said. “Small consistent changes like better sleep or daily structure can be just as stabilizing as bigger interventions.”

Healthline



ANNIA Palacios, a licensed professional counselor (LPC) with Tighrope Therapy, offers a few key signs of workplace anxiety:

- ▶ On your days off, you feel pretty good, and your anxiety lowers.
- ▶ If you work Monday through Friday, feelings of anxiety and dread overshadow your weekend, especially when you think about work.
- ▶ You experience trouble talking with colleagues, but you have no problem chatting with people outside of work.

How to know when your symptoms might relate to generalized anxiety disorder/condition?

Anxiety disorder symptoms are “persistent, consistent, and negatively affect several aspects of your life,” says Emme Smith, a licensed psychotherapist and CEO of GraySpace Counseling Group.

The key difference between the two, explains Alexandra Finkel, LCSW, a licensed psychotherapist and co-founder of Kind Minds Therapy, is that workplace anxiety generally develops in response to stress at work. An anxiety disorder, on the other hand, tends to develop and persist regardless of your work circumstances.

Signs of workplace anxiety

According to Palacios, you might:

- ▶ feel better at night but worse in the morning
- ▶ feel physically ill when thinking about work or receiving work emails, or calls
- ▶ have a hard time focusing on work-specific tasks
- ▶ notice that your motivation is shrinking
- ▶ procrastinate on work-related tasks
- ▶ avoid meetings, new projects, or work events

Workplace anxiety may involve physical symptoms, too. These might include:

- ▶ head and neck pain
- ▶ tension in your body
- ▶ sweating palms
- ▶ consistent stomach pain or nausea

What causes workplace anxiety?

A number of factors can contribute to workplace anxiety, and these can vary from person to person.

For example, says Palacios, work stress may stem from:

- ▶ needing to complete an urgent project or present at a meeting
- ▶ imposter syndrome, or a tendency to doubt yourself and feel deeply unqualified
- ▶ not having strong connections with colleagues
- ▶ managing a relationship with a difficult boss
- ▶ lacking a sense of purpose around your work

According to Kimberly Wilson, PhD, LMFT, an organizational psychologist and therapist, you could also develop workplace anxiety if your job:

- ▶ has a toxic workplace culture
- ▶ comes with unrealistic expectations
- ▶ lacks enough staff
- ▶ is highly competitive
- ▶ didn't provide proper training
- ▶ doesn't compensate you for overtime
- ▶ doesn't prioritize your health, wellness, or safety

In some cases, your work stress can also have a deeper, more subtle underlying cause

or contributing factor.

As Palacios also points out, “being an anxious person or having a pre-existing anxiety disorder can make us more likely to experience workplace-specific anxiety.”

For example, she notes, if you already live with anxiety, you might go straight to the worst-case scenario. Consequently, your workplace might become a significant source of stress if you (mistakenly) assume:

- ▶ you'll miss key deadlines
- ▶ your supervisor thinks you're doing a terrible job
- ▶ you'll always fall short of expectations

The takeaway

Workplace anxiety can be difficult to manage.

For tips on how to cope, check out our guide to managing workplace anxiety.

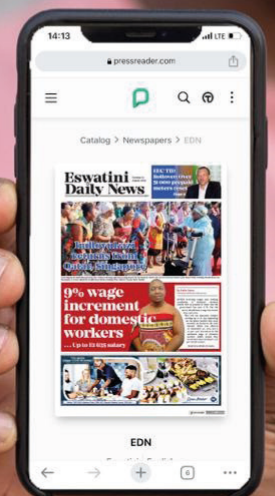
Healthline

● Anxiety disorder symptoms are “persistent, consistent, and negatively affect several aspects of your life

What is workplace anxiety?



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Highlights from the Ballon d'or 2025



▲ Ronaldinho presents the men's Ballon d'Or award to Paris St Germain's Ousmane Dembele.



▲ FC Barcelona's Aitana Bonmati after winning the women's Ballon d'Or award Paris, France.



▲ Former footballer Ruud Gullit and Kate Scott were the hosts of the 69th Ballon D'or ceremony.



▲ Paris St Germain's Ousmane Dembele and FC Barcelona's Aitana Bonmati after being crowned the Ballon d'or winners pose for a picture.



▲ FC Barcelona's Lamine Yamal makes a speech after winning the men's Kopa Trophy.



▲ Childs bring the France Football's Ballon d'Or trophies at the Ballon d'Or 2024 Ceremony at Theatre du Chatelet on September 22, 2025 in Paris, France.



▲ Arsenal women team upon being crowned women club of the year receiving their award.

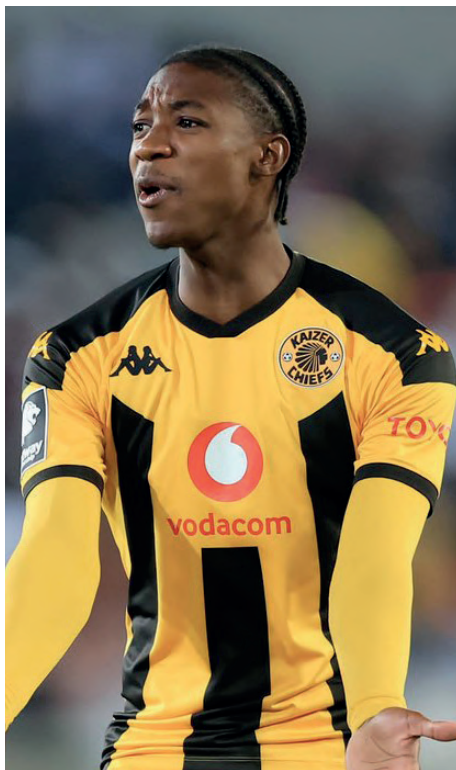
Chiefs loan out Zwane, Mashiane to Siwelele

KAIZER Chiefs stars Samkelo Zwane and Happy Mashiane will get a chance to revive and give their careers a boost after they were loaned out to Siwelele FC for the remainder of the 2025/26 season.

With the transfer window in South Africa having closed on Monday night, Amakhosi announced the two players' loan move to Siwelele, the PSL's new kids on the block in order for the youngsters to get some much-needed game time.

Both players are products of the Kaizer Chiefs Youth Development Academy. Mashiane plays at left-back and left-wing brings valuable CAF Champions League experience, while Zwane is widely regarded as one of the most talented young midfielders in the country. Their loan spells are expected to revive the players careers and also to bring back confidence within the youngsters. The 23-year-old Zwane is a highly rated player who was on the rise and expected to own a place in the starting line-up but he struggled to break into the squad. When Chiefs' new coach Nasreddine Nabi arrived at Naturena, Zwane was given ample time to impress and was a regular feature in the starting line-up.

However, He could not deliver the kind of performances expected of him, because of the high standards he displayed since he was promoted from the juniors to the senior team. He only played a handful of games last season. At Siwelele, he will have to work hard so that he is recalled by Amakhosi at the end



▲ Kaizer Chiefs stars Samkelo Zwane and Happy Mashiane will get a chance to revive and give their careers a boost after they were loaned out to Siwelele FC for the remainder of the 2025/26 season.



of the season Mashiane was also rising star until his performance declined. He was a key player when Amakhosi reached the Champions League final and he played against Pitso Mosimane's Al Ahly of Egypt. His appearances diminished and has been struggling to win his spot back at left back where the likes of

Bradley Cross and Paseka Mako have established themselves.

"We wish both lads all the best for the rest of the season and look forward to welcoming them back to Naturena soon," said the club via a statement.

(Sunday World)



Petersen denies player problems with Nabi

KAIZER Chiefs goalkeeper Brandon Petersen has rejected the idea that Amakhosi players enjoy their time more under assistant coaches Khalil Ben Youssef and Cedric Kaze than they did when Nasreddine Nabi was in charge.

Nabi is back in Tunisia and has confirmed he has parted ways with Chiefs. The club, however, have thus far been more cryptic.

Chiefs' fast start without Nabi

Chiefs won all three of Betway Premiership games at the start of this season. That was after Nabi had to leave to go back home after his wife was involved in a serious road accident.

"It has always been the same if Nabi is here or not here," Petersen told reporters at the Carling Black Label Knockout launch at FNB Stadium on Monday. "It is a conspiracy (to say the players enjoy the assistant coaches more). For us it is important to respect whoever is in charge. Our job is to play football and listen to the coaches." Nabi's departure was first reported on just two days after Chiefs had lost in the Premiership for the first time this season, going down 3-1 at home to Sekhukhune United on September 16.

Kaze and Ben Youssef at the Chiefs helm. for the first time (they also won two games while Nabi was suspended last season) when the side went down 1-0 to Kabuscorp of Angola in a Caf Confederation Cup first preliminary round, first leg tie in Luanda.

Chiefs will have a chance to turn that around at FNB Stadium on Saturday, but first they will host Marumo Gallants in the Premiership at the same venue on Wednesday.

Amakhosi will be keen to find the solidity in defence again that saw them not concede a single goal in their first five Premiership games.

'An opportunity to fix it'

"I think for us it is not to panic, or for us to start doubting ourselves" said Petersen on Chiefs' poor week so far. "We have proven to ourselves that we are capable of doing well and not conceding. So for us it is to take a step back, analyse ourselves, see where we went wrong and we have an opportunity on Wednesday to fix it." (The Citizen)



▲ Former Kaizer Chiefs coach Nasreddine Nabi.



Rassie makes two changes to starting XV to face Argentina

ERASMUS made only two personnel changes to his starting XV to face Argentina in Durban on Saturday – the Springboks' penultimate Rugby Championship match.

Siya Kolisi leads the team in his 97th Test with the experienced Eben Etzebeth and Damian Willemse taking over from the injured Lood de Jager and Aphelele Fassi at lock and fullback. As a result, Damian de Allende returns at inside centre alongside Canan Moodie in an exciting midfield combination.

The three changes on the again 5-3 bench are the inclusion of Boan Venter at prop, which sees Jan-Hendrik Wessels serve as the replacement hooker, while scrumhalf Morne van den Berg takes over from Grant Williams, who is nursing a niggles.

"The make-up of this team not only allows

us consistency in selection, but we'll also have the vast experience of Eben and Damian de Allende in the starting team, who are excited to get back on the field again," the Bok coach said. "On the bench, Jan-Hendrik covers prop and hooker equally efficiently, so Boan gets another chance along with Morne." Erasmus expected a monumental battle against the Pumas (9 points), who trail the top-placed Wallabies (11 points) on the Rugby Championship standings by only two points, while the Springboks are in second place and the All Blacks third, tied on 10 points.

"This is a vital match for both us and the Pumas, and if one takes into consideration that they beat New Zealand and Australia in the first four rounds of the competition, as well as the British & Irish Lions earlier in the season, there's no doubt we'll treat them the

respect they deserve," said Erasmus.

"They've made big strides in the last few seasons, and have an astute coach in Felipe Contepomi, so we know they are going to throw everything at us. Adding to that, they boast a strong forward pack and extremely talented backs, so they pose threats all around."

Springboks starting XV: Damian Willemse, Cheslin Kolbe, Canan Moodie, Damian de Allende, Ethan Hooker, Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, Cobus Reinach, Jasper Wiese, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Siya Kolisi (captain), Ruan Nortje, Eben Etzebeth, Thomas du Toit, Malcolm Marx, Ox Nche.

Replacements: Jan-Hendrik Wessels, Boan Venter, Wilco Louw, RG Snyman, Kwagga Smith, Morne van den Berg, Manie Libbok, André Esterhuizen.

(The Citizen)

Madueke out for two months with knee injury

ARSENAL'S strong start to the season has hit another bump in the road with news that they will be without a key player for the foreseeable future.

The Gunners are already without captain Martin Odegaard, Kai Havertz and Gabriel Jesus and another attack-minded player is now set for a spell on the sidelines.

The player in question? Noni Madueke who is now set to be out of action for two months with a knee injury, according to The Athletic. They add that his scans on Monday showed he avoided rupturing his anterior cruciate ligament in a relief to the forward, manager Mikel Arteta and England boss Thomas Tuchel.

Madueke suffered the injury during the first half of Arsenal's 1-1 draw with Manchester City in the Premier League on Sunday afternoon - and was forced to come off at half-time as a result.

It comes as a blow to the player and club, with the 23-year-old having enjoyed a fine start to life in north London, after joining in an initial deal worth £48m. The two-month time-frame means Madueke is likely to miss at least 11 Arsenal matches, which could increase depending on their Carabao Cup participation too.

That run of games includes a trip at Newcastle in the Premier League on Sunday and Champions League matches against Olympiacos (October 1), Atletico Madrid (October 21) and Slavia Praha (November 4).

On top of that he is set to miss at least one international window with England, which would be next month - while it is currently unlikely that he would feature in November's too.

Straight after the November international break, Arsenal have a mammoth week which



▲ Noni Madueke who is now set to be out of action for two months with a knee injury.

sees them host eternal rivals Tottenham (November 23) in the Premier League before entertaining Bayern Munich (November 26) in the Champions League. They then round that out with a trip to London foes Chelsea (November 30) in the Premier League.

Arteta is holding a press conference on Tuesday afternoon ahead of their Carabao Cup third-round tie at Port Vale on Wednesday and will be expected to provide an update on Madueke then.

(Mail online)



Record number of countries win medals at World Championships

A RECORD number of nations won medals at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo, with a total of 53 countries making it on to the medal table at the 20th edition of the event which concluded on Sunday.

The previous record of 46 was set in Osaka in 2007 and equalled in Budapest two years ago, with Samoa, Saint Lucia and Uruguay winning their first ever World Championships medals at this year's competition. There was one world record set in Tokyo, with Sweden's Mondo Duplantis breaking the pole vault world record for the 14th time with a leap of 6.30 metres.

American sprinter Melissa Jefferson-Wooden completed a sprint treble in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay while two other athletes won double gold in individu-

al events, Kenyan distance runner Beatrice Chebet and Spanish race walker Maria Perez.

"What we have seen over the past nine days here in Tokyo is an indelible and compelling celebration of human sporting endeavour," World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said.

"Tokyo has set the stage for some of our sport's most extraordinary performances." A total of 619,288 fans attended the World Championships in Tokyo, four years on from the Olympic Games at the same venue was held without crowds due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Over the past nine days, we have witnessed so many unforgettable moments," President of the Local Organising Committee Mitsugi Ogata said.

"There was never a quiet moment in the stadium." (Reuters)

Former tennis player, coach Pilic dies aged 86

FORMER Croatian tennis player and coach Nikola Pilic, who led Germany to three Davis Cup titles and mentored 24-time Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic, has died at the age of 86, his country's tennis association said on Tuesday.

Pilic, a French Open finalist as a player, captained Germany to three Davis Cup trophies between 1988 and 1993. He later led Croatia to their first Davis Cup title in 2005, and served as a consultant when Serbia won in 2010.

(Reuters)



▲ Former Croatian tennis player and coach Nikola Pilic is late.

Scheffler expects Trump's Ryder Cup presence to boost US team

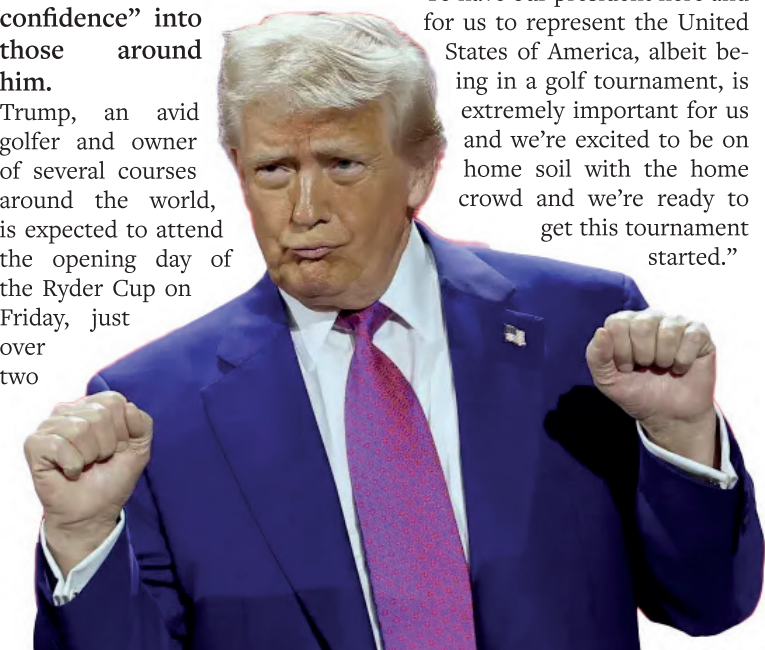
FARMINGDALE, - World number one Scottie Scheffler believes U.S. President Donald Trump's presence at this week's Ryder Cup will provide an extra spark for the American team, describing the commander-in-chief as someone who "feeds confidence" into those around him.

Trump, an avid golfer and owner of several courses around the world, is expected to attend the opening day of the Ryder Cup on Friday, just over two

weeks after the assassination of U.S. conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

"It's been a tough few weeks for our country with some of the stuff that's been going on," Scheffler told reporters at Bethpage Black ahead of his third Ryder Cup appearance.

"To have our president here and for us to represent the United States of America, albeit being in a golf tournament, is extremely important for us and we're excited to be on home soil with the home crowd and we're ready to get this tournament started."



▲ US President Donald Trump is to grace the Ryder Cup.

Trump is no stranger to attending major sporting events and in February became the first sitting U.S. president to attend a Super Bowl, then attended soccer's Club World Cup final in July and the U.S. Open men's tennis final in early September. Unlike at some of his other stops where Trump received a mixed reaction, the president will likely enjoy a warm welcome at the Ryder Cup, which this year is being played in a Republican stronghold on Long Island.

While Scheffler said Trump may not address the U.S. Ryder Cup team ahead of the match-play competition he did hint that success on the course this week against Europe could prompt presidential communication. "I don't think he has any plans to address us as a team, but I'm sure if things go well, we'll hear from him this week," said Scheffler.

The four-times major winner also said it would not be out of the ordinary to hear from Trump this week, especially if the United States can reclaim the Ryder Cup.

"He loves the game of golf, he loves supporting golfers, and I get a call or a text from him some-



▲ Scottie Scheffler putts on the second green during the final round of the TOUR Championship golf tournament.

times after wins," said Scheffler. "He just loves the game of golf, and he's one of those guys when you're around him, he does such a good job of, like, feeding confidence into everybody around him."

Scheffler added that he was particularly impressed by Trump's treatment of people from all walks

of life, describing his inclusive approach during golf events.

"Whether you're the person serving us lunch or the caddie on the golf course or the guy who's the president of the club that we're at, he treats everybody like they're the greatest person in the world," said Scheffler. (Reuters)

Nsingizini has biggest, toughest task

...Leopard is well in control against the youthful Young African

By Chris Dlamini

THE first leg of the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League and TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup has come and passed for Eswatini’s envoys, Nsingizini Hotspurs and Royal Leopard. It will all be about the decisive second leg this weekend, precisely on Friday for Leopard and Namibia’s Young African, then on Sunday, Insingizi Yezulu (Nsingizini) will be home to Zimbabwe’s Simba Bhora. Both games, fortunately, will for the first time in years be played at the Somhlolo National Stadium.

Ahead of these games, we highlight a few aspects after the first leg. Focus will first go to the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League, then Leopard, who won 2-0 over Namibian side Young African, will feature in Thursday’s edition.

Nsingizini Hotspurs

The league champions have it all to be where they are. They are currently the face of Eswatini football if anything closer to professionalism is mentioned. They are organised with a visionary leader in Derrick Shiba, the team’s President. His designated target is the group stage but not limited to that - he knows they can go beyond.

The Players:

- Nsingizini has a star-studded squad that can challenge Simba Bhora and turn things around at a whim at Somhlolo National Stadium, Lobamba.
- They narrowly lost away in Botswana in a game that could have ended 3-2 or 2-1 if all teams had taken their chances and the local

side’s goalkeeper had not made some decisive saves in both halves.

- Intensity:**
- This is perhaps where they must improve, going to the second leg on Sunday. They were outplayed in the middle, the most important department in such games.
 - One could see their lack of intensity after the opening 25 minutes, as the defence had to raise its hands and cover every thick of grass to deal with the pressure coming from Simba Bhora’s quick attacking football.

- Substitutes:**
- The coach took too long to make changes with the score at 0-0, but already, his key players, but Sizwe ‘Yeki’ Khumalo in the middle, were struggling.
 - The coach, Mandla Qhogi, also needs to get his selection right this time, perhaps start Wenzile Lushaba at the back and introduce Quality early, or even start this gem. The few minutes he was on in Botswana, Nsingizini pressed and won a couple of corners and half-chances.
 - He can also get Kwakhe Thwala a bit higher up the field than at wing back where he was restricted by the strong Simba Bhora forwards.

- How they go through:**
- A 2-0 win will be enough to see them through to the second preliminary round against Tanzania outfit Simba SC or Botswana’s Gaborone United.
 - A 1-0 win will see the match decided on penalties.
 - If Nsingizini wins 2-1, the aggregate score will be 2-2, and Simba Bhora will advance on away goal advantage.



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs Yekisizwe Khumalo negotiating his way past Simba Bhora players.



▲ Thubelihle Mavuso selling a dummy to the opposition player.



▲ Leopards captain Muzi ‘Mzoro’ Dlamini sandwiched by the opposition players.



▲ Royal Leopard’s Simanga Masangane celebrating one of their goals during their 2-0 win over Young Africans.



▲ Leopards captain Muzi ‘Mzoro’ Dlamini sandwiched by the opposition players.

Stories By **Sibusiso Masilela**
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GETTING bigger and better.
The 2025 MTN Road Classic will be attended by riders from five SADC countries. The 11th edition of the annual road race will take place on Saturday at Mankayane, attended by riders from Eswatini, South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, and Lesotho.
The race is funded by MTN Eswatini by E350 000, with four categories lined up for the day: 100km, 60km, 30km, and 5km.
This is according to a press statement released by the MTN Khemani Cycling Club.
“Riders from various regional countries have shown interest in taking part in the challenging 100km race. We look forward to a successful event,” the club said.
This year’s edition will have the Malmas category for the most resilient rider on the day.
The new category is in honour of the late MTN Khemani rider Malvern Masango.
Masango lost his life in 2024 after being knocked down by a car at Mfabantfu along the Mbabane - Manzini highway.
Other riders who lost their lives on the roads include Shirley Motsa (Newcomm Wheels) and Victor Oliveria (Kusekhaya Cycling Club).
Several local clubs such as 4eva Cycling Club, Newcomm Wheels, Team G and Dark-ton Cycling Club will take part in the race.



▲ Riders in action during a local race.

Taekwondo President congratulates national team

A Proud moment for the nation.
Eswatini Taekwondo Federation President Zakhele Dlamini has congratulated the national team for its success in the recent Africa Taekwondo Union Zone VI championships.
This follows the national team’s dominant display in the inaugural international assignment held over the weekend in Maputo.
The mixed national team won 18 medals during the inaugural inter-national assignment held over the weekend in Maputo.
The national team wrapped the two-day championships with five

medals on Sunday, with Busisiwe Shekinah winning the only gold medal on the last day.
She joined the likes of Khaya Dube, Saneliso Masuku, Gcinumuzi Mkhathswa, Sihlelelwe Matsebula, Sandziso Mamba, Sandzisile Matsebula, and Nonhle Maduma in the list of gold medalists.
Other podium finishers on the last day are Sinokubonga (Silver), Semusa Abande (bronze), Simisile Tfwala (silver), and Lindelwa Marilyn (bronze). Veteran artists such as Sifiso Dlamini, Lindelwa Mkhathswa, Carlotla Munave, Thandukhanya Dlamini, and Notsikelelo Ntshalin-

shali also excelled in the competition, winning bronze and silver medals, respectively.
The eight highest podium finishers have qualified for the 2026 African Taekwondo Championships, to be held at a venue yet to be confirmed. They will further compete in the finals of the newly introduced zonal competitions in the Ivory Coast in November.
“We are very proud of the national team. We urge them to continue working hard in the future. This is a sign of growth for the sport, and we are in the right direction as a country,” he said.



▲ The Taekwondo national team during the African series competition qualifiers.



▲ Previc golf challenge September winner Mlungisi Magagula with the sponsors representative Mangaliso Masilela.

New champion for Previc golf challenge

A new champion has emerged victorious during the September edition of the Previc golf challenge.
This is none other than Mlungisi Magagula, who netted 40 points to take home the title of the Lubombo monthly mug on Saturday at Mananga Country Club.
The champion was on top of his game as he won the longest drive category in the novelty section. The champion was followed by former winner Zenzi Hadzebe, who finished with 39 points on a countback.
Fortune Ngwenya rounded off the podium finish with 39 points. The novelty section saw Mlungisi Magagula win the longest drive, while Victor Mavundla and Nathie Tsabedze won the nearest to the pin contests on holes 2/11 and 5/14, respectively. Previc Investment director Mangaliso Masilela pledged continued support to the competition.
“Kudos to the champion for his excellent performance on the day, and we urge him to continue working hard in his career. We would like to thank golfers for attending the tournament in numbers, which is a sign of growth for the competition,” he said.
The Director also thanked their partners for supporting the tournament.
“We are grateful for the support of Stainless Designs and HK designs for providing us with water on the day,” he said.
Full results
1. Mlungisi Magagula 40 points.
2. Zenzi Hadzebe 39 points on a countback.
3. Fortune Ngwenya 39 points.
4. Mzwandile Mamba 38points.
Novelty section
Mlungisi Magagula’s longest drive.

‘Yeki’ in new look Sihlangu

By Sibusiso Masilela
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JUSTICE has been served.

2024/25 MTN Premier League Player of the Season and 8Bet Trade Fair Cup 2025 Player Of The Tournament Yekisizwe ‘Yeki’ Khumalo, has been included in the Sihlangu squad. He will be part of the nation’s pride squad that will face Angola and Cape Verde in the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers next month. Notably, he was overlooked by former Sihlangu coach Zdravko Logarusic in the recent FIFA World Cup Qualifiers against Angola and Libya.

This follows the elevation of assistant coach Sifiso ‘Nuro’ Ntibane to the Interim Head Coach position following the departure of Croatian mentor Zdravko Logarusic, who recently left the job by mutual consent. Ntibane will be assisted by Mbabane Highlanders head coach Ernest Mavuso.

The pair once served as co-coaches after being assistant coaches to former head coach Dominic Kunene. A source close to the matter revealed that the former Moneni Pirates player will be part of the senior national team.

“Yeki is included in the new look Sihlangu that will be announced before the end of the week, together with other players such as Ayanda Kunene (Royal Leopards) and the Manzini Sea Birds trio of Muzi Tsabedze, Philani Mkhonto and Mpendulo Thomo,” the source said.

Khumalo helped the Shiselweni-based side win the previous campaign league title to qualify for the current campaign CAF Champions League.

EFA said the squad would be announced in due course through a press statement. “Preparations for the forthcoming matches will commence on the 25th of September 2025, with the Acting Head Coach expected

Senior referee blasts PLE

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

VETERAN referee Celumusa Malinga lashed out at the Premier League of Eswatini.

Malinga accused the top-flight football entity of undermining them during the Eswatini Referees Association Special meeting held on Sunday at Sigwaca.

“Can the executive committee deal with the issue of PLE, who are undermining us when it comes to our allowances. They never take us seriously when it comes to payments, as they usually take time to pay what is due for us, yet we are an important stakeholder,” he said.

Eswatini Referees Association Chairman Mbongiseni Fakudze said they would address the concerns of members.

PLE Chief Executive Officer (PLE) Pat Vilakati said he was not privy to comment on the matter when reached for comment.

“I cannot comment until I receive a formal statement from the Referees Association,” he said.



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs Yekisizwe Khumalo negotiating his way past Simba Bhora players.

to announce his list of selected players on the 24th of September 2025.

Preparations, at this point, will commence without the players who would have been selected from Nsingizini Hotspurs FC and Royal Leopards FC, who are currently playing in the first-round matches of the preliminary phase of the CAF Interclub competitions.

Players who would be selected belonging to these two clubs are expected to join the national team on Monday, 29th September 2025,” the organisation said.

The mother body further congratulated

Sifiso Ntibane on his appointment as interim head coach. “EFA wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate Sifiso Ntibane on his assumption of this new role, albeit on an acting basis, and welcomes Ernest Mavuso into the technical team of the national team and counts on their professional aptitudes to steward the national team in the forthcoming matches, and as such solicits the support of all stakeholders. The EFA Executive Committee will meet upon the conclusion of the World Cup qualifiers to discuss the medium- and long-term landscape of the national team,” the organisation said.



▲ Eswatini veteran referee Celumusa Malinga during the AGM.

R. Leopard dominates RES Siyakha One-Day tournament

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

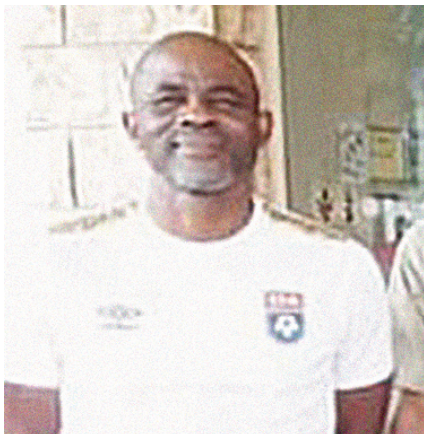
ROYAL Leopard Development teams dominated the RES Siyakha 1800 One-Day tournament held at Simunye on Saturday.

The police side was crowned champions in both the Under 15 and Under 17 categories, while their Under 13 team was runners-up in their category.

They proved to be a well-prepared team as they won most of their matches with comfortable scorelines, scoring an avalanche of goals in the process.

Simunye Zone Juniors, who were crowned champions of the under 13 category seemed to have been the only team to challenge the visiting Leopard side. In all the other categories, the Simunye side were runners-up to eventual champions, Leopard in what was an interesting battle.

The games were watched by hordes of football lovers, including sponsors, RES representatives, as well as Lubombo Regional Football Association (LRFA), newly elected Executive Committee members, including Sifiso ‘Barnes’ Dlamini and Zweli Ndzimandze.



▲ Lubombo Regional Football Association’s Sifiso ‘Barnes’ Dlamini.

... Fruits of the programme evident – LRFA’s Barnes

LUBOMBO Regional Football Association (LRFA) Executive Committee Member Sifiso ‘Barnes’ Dlamini believes that the impact of the RES Siyakha programme is evident for everyone to see.

Dlamini highlighted that games were a success as the players got ample time to play and demonstrate their ability to cope under pressure in games.

“The games were a huge success, even though we finished very late. It was more like TDS for Siyakha, and the presence of Royal Leopard, who brought their U-13, U-15, and U-17s, helped us as the players learnt a lot from them. We believe that we gained the necessary exposure,” Dlamini said.

Leopard development was led by the club’s retired former player, Zweli ‘Mlilo’ Nxumalo, who also got the opportunity to advise the youngsters on the dangers of drugs and other substances in football.



**Chiefs loan out
Zwane, Mashiane to
Siwelele**

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**Leopard dominate
RES Siyakha
One-Day tourney**

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‘Yeki’ in new look Sihlangu

... The Nsingizini star will be part of the nation’s pride squad that will face Angola and Cape Verde in the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers next month. *Page 23*