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UN Framework Convention on Climate Change:

King unveils bold emissions reduction target

By King's Office Correspondent

NEW YORK, USA - His Majesty King Mswati III has announced Eswatini's plan to reduce 2.24 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. He has also revealed that the country is among the first 10 countries to submit its Paris Agreement-compliant NDC 3.0 plan to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The plan outlines programmes, resources and a clear plan to achieve this target by 2035.

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**Mutharika
Declared Malawi's
Seventh President**



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**HMCS athlete wins
LaMgabhi Army
recruitment race**



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80TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. . .

His Majesty King Mswati III unveils bold emissions reduction target

By King's Office Correspondent

NEW YORK, USA - His Majesty King Mswati III has announced Eswatini's plan to reduce 2.24 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by 2035.

He has also revealed that the country is among the first 10 countries to submit its Paris Agreement-compliant NDC 3.0 plan to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The plan outlines programmes, resources and a clear plan to achieve this target by 2035.

Speaking at a high-level event on Climate Change on the sidelines of the 80th United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday, His Majesty said despite the Kingdom's low emissions, it remains committed to the Paris Agreement.

To meet this goal, His Majesty revealed that Eswatini would need approximately E43 billion (US\$2.4 billion). "Despite this, Eswatini comes to this meeting determined to turn vulnerability into resilience. We are pleased to announce that we have concluded and submitted the Paris Agreement-compliant NDC 3.0," he said, noting the Kingdom was among 10 African nations meeting the September deadline, supported by the local UN Office and partners.

The NDC 3.0 revision was comprehensive and inclusive, with locally driven greenhouse gas data demonstrating national ownership. Lessons from NDC 2.0 and meaningful dialogues shaped the robust report, aligned with the 2023-2028 National Development Plan and the long-term Low Emissions Development Strategy. "Eswatini will reform laws and strengthen all institutions to improve capacity, accountability, monitoring and reporting," His Majesty said.

Financial constraints limited NDC 2.0, which targeted US\$900 million (E16.2 billion) to US\$1.5 billion (E27 billion), raising only US\$449 million (E8.1 billion) since 2018. The NDC 3.0's E43 billion cost requires scaled-up, predictable climate finance. "Thus, we expect stronger collaboration with our partners, including



▲ An ariel view shot of the high-level event on Climate Change on the sidelines of the 80th United Nations General Assembly.

the local private sector, to finance the US\$2 billion (E36 billion) gap," the King said.

"Eswatini will remain a net carbon sink and reduce 2.24 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. We will also invest in climate-smart agriculture and technology. Early warning systems, water resource management, waste management and infrastructure will be improved to protect our most vulnerable society," he stated. A just energy transition will promote affordable, clean technologies and a low-

carbon, climate-resilient economy.

Green finance instruments and incentives will align financial flows with climate priorities to attract sustainable investment.

A Sendai-aligned Disaster Risk Management Fund will enhance risk financing and reporting, while renewable energy and digital tools are prioritised. "Climate-smart technologies should be affordable for farmers, homeowners and entrepreneurs after the loss and damage

fund is recapitalised," His Majesty said.

"Eswatini cares about survival and opportunity. With the right support, the country can turn climate challenges into green growth, food sovereignty and shared prosperity," he concluded.

China's President Xi Jinping, addressing the session via video link, supported the Paris Agreement, committing to a 10 per cent emissions reduction by 2033, countering US President Donald Trump's claims about China's green technology practices.

Taiwan Tourism delegation explores partnership opportunities in Eswatini

By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

A distinguished delegation from Taiwan's tourism sector is scheduled to visit the Kingdom of Eswatini from September 26 to October 1, 2025, marking a significant move to deepen bilateral cooperation in tourism.

This high-level delegation comprises executives from some of Taiwan's foremost travel agencies and hotel groups, alongside representatives from the Taiwan Hotel Association. According to a press release by Eswatini Tourism Authority, their visit aims to foster direct collaboration with Eswatini's local tourism operators and to gain firsthand experience of the country's unique attractions and hospitality offerings.

The Taiwanese delegation includes leaders from Richmond Tours, CP Travel Service, South East Travel, YS Travel, Discovered Travel Service, Lion Travel, Phoenix Tours, Leofoo Tourism Group, and Colourful Tour Travel Agency. This diverse group reflects Taiwan's strategic intent to build robust tourism partnerships with Eswatini, leveraging the country's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty to enhance mutual tourism flows.

The visit will commence with a Tourism Partnership Briefing on September 26, hosted at the Hilton Mbabane. The event will feature opening remarks by Ching-lin



▲ Taiwan Tourism delegation explores partnership opportunities in Eswatini

Tsuei, Minister of the Taiwan Embassy, who will highlight the importance of tourism as a bridge for cultural exchange and economic development between the two nations. Vusie Dlamini, CEO of the Eswatini Tourism Authority, will present an overview of Eswatini's tourism landscape, accompanied by insights from representatives of the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Eswatini (HOTAES) and the Eswatini Tour Guides and Tours Operators Association (ENTOTOGA). This briefing aims to set the stage for fruitful dialogue and collaboration.

Throughout their stay, the delegation will undertake extensive cultural and natural site visits to iconic destinations

such as Sibebe Rock, one of the largest exposed granite domes in the world, and the Malolotja Nature Reserve, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and biodiversity. Visits to Hlane National Park and Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary will provide immersive wildlife experiences, while the Mantenga Cultural Village will offer a deep dive into Eswatini's rich traditions and cultural heritage. The delegation will also explore prominent craft hubs including Swazi Candles and Ngwenya Glass, showcasing the nation's artisanal craftsmanship and potential for cultural tourism development.

In addition to site visits, the delegation will conduct thorough inspections of

key hospitality facilities. These include the Hilton Garden Inn, Summerfield, Sibebe Resort, Mountain Inn, Mantenga Lodge, and Happy Valley. These tours will facilitate direct engagement with Eswatini's hospitality industry leaders, enabling discussions on service excellence, infrastructure development, and joint marketing strategies aimed at attracting Taiwanese and international tourists.

A pivotal moment of the visit will be the official courtesy call on September 29 with the Acting Minister of Tourism. This high-level meeting will focus on exploring practical avenues for enhanced cooperation, including exchange programs, joint promotional campaigns, and potential investments in tourism infrastructure. Both parties are expected to express optimism about expanding tourist arrivals and the broader economic benefits that can result from a strengthened partnership.

This visit highlights the growing momentum in Taiwan-Eswatini relations, with tourism emerging as a key sector for bilateral collaboration. The delegation's direct engagement with Eswatini's travel stakeholders and their firsthand experience of the country's natural beauty, cultural richness, and hospitality infrastructure are poised to pave the way for sustainable partnerships. These efforts promise to expand tourist flows, stimulate economic growth, and deepen cultural ties between Taiwan and Eswatini.



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III addressing the 80th General Assembly.



▲ Inkhosikati LaNtetesa listening to His Majesty's address.

King urges UN to form ad hoc committees for global peace

By King's Office Correspondents

NEW YORK, USA - His Majesty King Mswati III has called for the United Nations to establish ad hoc committees to mediate the global conflicts.

Addressing the 80th General Assembly. The King proposed these committees to tackle escalating global tensions, reinforcing the UN's founding mission to foster peace. He urged the committees, to be supported by the UN Secretariat, to visit conflict zones and engage directly with communities to broker solutions.

Focusing on Africa, His Majesty highlighted conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, the Sahel, and the Great Lakes, advocating for equitable representation to ensure all affected nations have a voice.

In the Middle East, he suggested the committees facilitate dialogue, asking Palestinians what it would take to release hostages and Israelis what would halt bombardments, to prevent further loss of life and property.

Pathways

Regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the King proposed that the committees mediate discussions to identify peace pathways and provide actionable recommendations to the UN. "We must remind ourselves that when the United Nations was established in 1945, it was during a time of widespread global strife," he said.

"Now is the time to ask ourselves what has gone wrong and what steps must be taken to correct these challenges." He emphasised that this approach complements existing peace efforts, warning against actions that escalate tensions. "Millions of lives have already been lost during the Covid-19 pandemic. We therefore,



▲ Cabinet ministers and other members of the delegation during the King's address.



▲ Emazinyane listening attentively.

cannot afford to lose any more to conflicts," he added.

The King also addressed UN Security Council reform, Sustainable Development

Goals, digital transformation, health rights, disaster resilience, and empowerment of youth, women, and persons with disabilities, aligning with the theme "Better Together."

Ezulwini consensus reform of UN security council urgent

NEW YORK, USA - His Majesty King Mswati III has renewed calls for restructuring the United Nations Security Council to ensure inclusive representation, during his UN address. Speaking at the 80th General Assembly on 25 September 2025, the King stressed that the UN must represent all member states through regionally balanced decisions, warning that without reform, its legitimacy and effectiveness remain incomplete.

This position aligns with the Ezulwini Consensus, the African Union's common stance on UN reform adopted in 2005 in Ezulwini, Eswatini. The Consensus demands at least two permanent seats for Africa with veto power, plus five non-permanent seats, to address historical injustices and enhance Africa's role in global security.

Originating from an Extraordinary Session of the AU Executive Council in Addis Ababa, the Ezulwini Consensus also tackles broader threats like HIV/AIDS, poverty, and environmental degradation, advocating debt relief for indebted nations and curbs on small arms trade.

It emphasises a cautious approach to the Responsibility to Protect, safeguarding state sovereignty, and supports UN funding for regional peacekeeping, including a Peacebuilding Commission.

The subsequent Sirte Declaration in July 2005 reinforced these demands, underscoring Africa's push for a democratic, equitable UN system.

This call comes amid global conflicts, with the King proposing ad hoc committees for peace mediation, complementing Security Council enhancements.

... Eswatini calls for Taiwan's UN inclusion

NEW YORK, USA - His Majesty reiterated Eswatini's stance on Taiwan's participation in the UN system.

"The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758, adopted in 1971, did not address the issue of Taiwan's representation in the United Nations, and it does not preclude their participation in the UN system," he stated.

"The United Nations must seek suitable ways of including Taiwan so that it can better contribute to realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In that way, this will fulfil the UN mandate to ensure that no country is left behind."

This call reiterates Eswatini's ongoing advocacy for Taiwan's inclusion to enhance global cooperation and sustainable development efforts.

Encouraging strides in SDGs amid challenges

NEW YORK, USA - The Kingdom of Eswatini has reported notable progress on several Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs).

In his speech at the 80th UN General Assembly yesterday, His Majesty the King highlighted advancements in pursuit of the aspirations of Agenda 2030, particularly in economic sectors, health, education and gender equality.

He said through his national call of "Nkwe" for urgency in sustainable development, Eswatini has improved literacy rates and empowered citizens via targeted

programmes.

He pointed out that the country's GDP has shown growth, and so have initiatives to attract investments and expand trading opportunities, including access to regional and international markets. Eswatini is actively pursuing digital transformation as a catalyst for development, opening doors for partnerships with advanced nations in technology.

On health, he said the kingdom was proud of the progress under SDG 3, welcoming the ratification of the Pandemic Treaty to bolster preparedness against future emergencies.

He said efforts in disaster resilience address the increasing frequency of natural disasters, integrating humanitarian relief with long-term development.

He further highlighted that empowerment of youth, women and persons with disabilities remains a priority, tackling unemployment and inequality through UN-supported programmes that create enabling environments.

"However, challenges persist, including a fragile global economy, inflation, and debt servicing burdens diverting resources from social programmes," he lamented,

saying Sub-Saharan Africa, including Eswatini, spends an average of 12 per cent of government revenues on debt, hindering SDG acceleration.

His Majesty called for UN support to elevate Eswatini to advanced economy status, advocating for trade facilitation and diversification through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which could boost intra-African trade by up to 52 per cent.

With only five years to Agenda 2030, the King called for redoubled international efforts, noting how global progress is off track with only 17 per cent of targets on course.

FOCUS ON MALAWI PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Mutharika declared Malawi's

Stories By Delisa Magagula

PROFESSOR Arthur Peter Mutharika has been declared the winner of Malawi's 2025 presidential election, securing a decisive victory to return to the State House as the country's seventh President.

The Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) announced the results on Wednesday evening, following a thorough verification process and resolution of post-election complaints.

Out of 7.2 million registered voters, 5.5 million cast their ballots, representing a turnout of 76.4%. Mutharika, leader of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), polled 3,035,249 votes, representing 56.8 per cent of the valid votes cast.

His closest challenger, incumbent President Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), secured 1,765,170 votes, or 33 per cent.

Seventeen candidates contested the presidency, but the race largely came down to Mutharika and Chakwera. UTM Party candidate Dr Dalitso Kabambe finished a dis-

tant third with 211,413 votes (4 per cent).

Former President Joyce Banda of the People's Party attracted 86,106 votes (1.6 per cent).

Meanwhile, MEC Chairperson Justice Annabel Mtalimanja stated that the results reflected the will of the Malawian people. "The Commission has meticulously followed the entire electoral process based on the law that governs elections in Malawi. We assess that this presidential election was free and fair and that these results are a true reflection of the will of the people," she said.

District-by-district results underlined Mutharika's dominance. He won overwhelmingly in the Southern Region, including Mangochi (257,098 votes), Blantyre (118,691 votes) and Phalombe (134,205 votes). Chakwera, however, held strong in the Central Region, winning Lilongwe (511,625 votes), Kasungu (160,210 votes) and Mchinji (126,187 votes).

Despite some polling anomalies and more than 155,000 void votes, the Commission said these did not affect the outcome. "It is the voter who decides who wins the election," Mtalimanja said.

The Commission noted that the President-elect cannot be sworn in



▲ Peter Mutharika has won Malawi's presidential elections.

before the expiry of seven days and not later than 30 days after the results are declared, in line with the Constitution.

In her closing remarks, Justice Mtalimanja urged Malawians to ac-

cept the outcome peacefully.

"What binds us together as Malawians is much stronger than what separates us into political parties. Let us all work together to give our future generations a stronger and

prosperous Malawi," she said.

With this victory, Mutharika returns to lead Malawi five years after leaving office, carrying the hopes of millions of voters who endorsed his comeback.



▲ Former Deputy Prime Minister Themba Masuku (Front left) Head of the SADC Election Observation Mission listening to the official announcement of the final national election results.



▲ Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika's supporters in a jovial mood.

Chakwera concedes defeat, commits to peaceful transition

OUTGOING President Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera has conceded defeat in Malawi's 2025 general election, congratulating Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika on his victory and pledging a peaceful transfer of power.

In a national address delivered from Kamuzu Palace hours before the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) announced the final tally, Chakwera acknowledged that his main rival had secured an insurmountable lead.

"A moment ago, I called Professor Mutharika directly to congratulate him on his historic victory and to wish him well in his upcoming tenure as the seventh President of the Republic of Malawi," Chakwera said.

While acknowledging the disappointment of

his supporters, Chakwera said respect for the constitution and the will of the majority demanded that he step aside.

"Regardless of whether or not you voted, and regardless of how you voted, if you are a Malawian citizen anywhere in the world, I want to thank you for conducting yourself throughout this election in a peaceful, orderly and lawful manner," he said.

The outgoing leader assured Malawians of a smooth handover. He revealed he had instructed his team to work with the incoming administration to ensure continuity of services and stability. "I am fully committed to facilitating a peaceful transfer of power," he said.

Chakwera praised the MEC for its handling of the polls, singling out Chairperson Justice An-

nel Mtalimanja throughout the process.

He, however, urged the Commission to follow through on addressing anomalies detected in some districts, noting that accountability would strengthen Malawi's democracy. The president also called for unity behind his successor. "Professor Mutharika's success in leading our nation towards prosperity will depend on all of us standing as one people," Chakwera said. Chakwera concluded by thanking Malawians for entrusting him with the presidency over the past five years.

"I will forever be grateful for the privilege to serve as your sixth President. What matters now is for all of us to work together as one nation to make Malawi better, because that's how we will all be winners in the end," he said.



▲ Outgoing President Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera.

FOCUS ON MALAWI PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

seventh President



▲ The Election board.



▲ Themba Masuku having a light moment with a Malawi Election Commission official before the announcement of the official elections results.

PROFESSOR Arthur Peter Mutharika has been confirmed as the Seventh President of the Republic of Malawi following the 2025 General Election, capping a process that has been widely praised by regional observers for its adherence to law and exceptional peacefulness. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has issued a robust statement endorsing the outcome, highlighting the successful conclusion of the electoral period. The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) confirmed that the election, held on September 16th to elect the President, Members of Parliament, and Councillors, was conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner. The SEOM, being His Majesty King Mswati III noted that the Malawi Electoral Commission diligently processed all results in strict accordance with the stipulated electoral law, lending strong legitimacy to the final tally announced on the evening of September 24th, 2025.

His Majesty hails Malawi for democratic maturity

However, the defining moment of the transition came hours before the final official announcement. Incumbent President H.E. Dr Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera demonstrated remarkable statesmanship by addressing the nation at midday on September 24. Dr Chakwera acknowledged his main contender, Professor Mutharika, had secured an insurmountable lead and was the presumptive winner of the presidential election. In a significant display of democratic maturity, President Chakwera informed the nation that he had personally called Professor Mutharika to congratulate him. The official statement, issued under the highest regional authority, underscores the importance of the peaceful transition. His Majesty King Mswati III in his capacity as the Incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, released the statement regarding the outcome. He formally acknowledged the crucial finding of the SEOM.



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III has lauded the success of the Malawi elections.

King commends peaceful election

THE Southern African Development Community (SADC) has praised Malawi for conducting its 2025 general election in a peaceful and orderly manner, describing the process as a model of democratic maturity in the region. In a statement delivered on Wednesday by His Majesty King Mswati III of Eswatini, the incoming Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation, the regional bloc commended both Malawians and their leaders for upholding democratic values throughout the polls. The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM), which deployed monitors across the country, said the election and post-election period had been calm, with Malawians displaying patience as results were processed. The Mission highlighted outgoing President Lazarus Chak-

wera's concession as a defining moment of leadership. "The SEOM welcomes and appreciates the leadership and public gesture by Dr Chakwera, which entrenches respect for the will of the people of Malawi, constitutional values, and the overall spirit of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections," the statement read. SADC urged all political stakeholders to carry forward this spirit of peace and tolerance beyond the election period, emphasising that national unity was key to Malawi's socio-economic development. "The SEOM extends its profound gratitude to the Malawian people for their tolerance of divergent political views and urges all stakeholders to remain true to these attributes beyond the release of the final results, as they engage in their daily activities for the socio-economic development of Malawi and the SADC region," it said.



▲ The Southern African Development Community has issued a robust statement endorsing the outcome, highlighting the successful conclusion of the electoral period.

"The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) observed in its Preliminary Statement released on 18 September 2025 that the General Election was conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner," read the statement. The SADC further expressed its appreciation to the people of Malawi for their patience and calm throughout the waiting period.

Govt plans to upgrade Good Shepherd College into University

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

MINISTER of Education and Training, Owen Nxumalo, has revealed that the government is working towards transforming Good Shepherd College of Nursing into a fully-fledged university. This development is expected to greatly expand higher education opportunities in the health sector and beyond.

Speaking during the official opening of the Inter-Regional Meeting of Catholic Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) Golden Jubilee Conference at Esibayeni Lodge, Nxumalo said the proposed upgrade is part of the government's long-term strategy to broaden access to tertiary education and to strengthen Eswatini's capacity in producing skilled professionals.

"The government has committed itself to invest in institutions of higher learning, and we are currently working towards upgrading Good Shepherd College into a university," said Nxumalo. "This will not only cater for our nation's health workforce needs but also contribute to academic research and development."

The Minister explained that the move comes at a time when the country is experiencing an increasing demand for specialised training in nursing, medicine, and allied health professions. By upgrading the college, students will have access to advanced degree programmes without the need to seek further training outside the country.

Nxumalo further highlighted that the establishment of a new university will complement existing institutions such as the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) and Southern Africa Nazarene University (SANU), thereby expanding the higher education landscape in the Kingdom.

Education experts welcomed the announcement, saying the upgrade would ease



the pressure on the few existing universities and open new pathways for research, innovation, and professional growth. Health sector stakeholders have also praised the idea, pointing out that Eswatini's health system needs more qualified professionals to meet growing population demands.

A student nurse at Good Shepherd College, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said: "This is encouraging news for us. Currently, we must look outside the country if we want to pursue postgraduate studies. Having a university here at home will save us costs and keep us closer to our families."

Good Shepherd College, located in Siteki, is a Catholic Church-owned institution with a long history of training nurses and mid-

wives for Eswatini and the region. The Minister's announcement was therefore fitting, as it was made in the presence of more than 120 Catholic bishops from Southern Africa who had gathered for the IMBISA Jubilee celebrations.

Father Ncamiso Vilakati, Media Liaison Officer of the Roman Catholic Church in Eswatini, said the church was pleased with the government's commitment.

"The Catholic Church has always placed education and healthcare at the heart of its mission. The news that Good Shepherd will be upgraded into a university affirms the church's long-standing contribution to nation-building," he said.



▲ Minister of Education and Training, Owen Nxumalo.

Correctional Services athlete wins LaMgabhi Army recruitment race

THE LaMgabhi community erupted in cheers on Thursday afternoon as Ncamiso Hlatjwako (34), an accomplished athlete and member of His Majesty's Correctional Services Athletic Team, crossed the finish line first in the army recruitment race. On the women's side, Neliswa Mabuza (23) clinched victory, completing the 3.2-kilometre course ahead of dozens of her competitors.

The race, which drew over one hundred eager participants, formed part of the ongoing nationwide Umfutso Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) recruitment exercise. Candidates were tested on their stamina, speed, and determination qualities essential for military service.

Hlatjwako, who has balanced his career as an athlete and employee with Montigny Investments since 2020, said preparation was key to his victory.

"I had prepared for this race, and I am grateful my hard work paid off," he told Eswatini Daily News (EDN) shortly after the event. "I also recently won a marathon race in the Republic of South Africa, and that gave me confidence coming into this competition."

Beyond his athletic prowess, Hlatjwako is



▲ LaMgabhi youth who participated in the recruitment race.

also a family man. "I have a wife and a child, and they are my greatest motivation. I would also like to thank His Majesty King Mswati III for affording me this opportunity to serve my country," he added proudly.

For Mabuza, the 23-year-old woman's race winner, Thursday's victory marked the beginning of a promising journey. She described the event as challenging but rewarding.

"I pushed myself as hard as I could because I knew this opportunity might never come again. I am humbled to have won, and I look forward to the next stage of the recruitment process," she said.

The race drew strong support from LaMgabhi residents, who lined the route to cheer on their sons and daughters. The atmosphere was festive yet tense, as every participant knew the race represented more than sport – it was a gateway to a potential career in the army.

An elder in the community, Gogo Dlamini, expressed pride in the youth. "Our children have shown bravery." We are happy to see them competing for such a noble calling," she said.

Army officials commended the turnout, saying the recruitment races continue to draw impressive numbers across constitu-



▲ Ncamiso Hlatjwako 34 who outran them all at LaMgabhi Inkhundla recruitment race.

encies. The exercise not only identifies physically capable candidates but also highlights the discipline and resilience needed for service in the UEDF. For Hlatjwako, Mabuza, and many others, the journey does not end at the finish line. Successful candidates will proceed to medical and background checks as the selection process intensifies.



Monetary Policy Statement

19 September 2025

Interest Rate

6.75%

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) maintained the interest rate at **6.75 per cent**.

What does this mean?

Banks are expected to maintain the prime lending rate on loans extended to individuals and businesses at **10.25 per cent** until the next monetary policy meeting.

Inflation

2.6%

Headline inflation decreased to **2.6 per cent** in August 2025 from **2.8 per cent** in July 2025.

What to expect?

The CBE expects the cost of goods and services to increase moderately in 2025. The Bank marginally revised down its inflation forecast for 2025 to 3.24 per cent (from 3.49 per cent forecasted in July 2025).

Economic Activity

Eswatini's Quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 3.0 per cent in 2024 compared to a growth of 3.5 per cent in 2023. On a quarterly basis, GDP recorded a year-on-year decline of 0.3 per cent (seasonally adjusted) in the first quarter of 2025, compared to a revised growth of 1.7 per cent in the previous quarter.

On the 19th September 2025, the Central Bank of Eswatini (Bank), together with the Monetary Policy Consultative Committee (MPCC) held a meeting to consider the appropriate monetary policy stance. Taking into consideration relevant global, regional, and domestic economic factors; as well as the price and financial stability mandate, the Bank decided to maintain the discount rate at 6.75 per cent.

On the global front, economic growth general remains subdued. Amongst advanced economies (AEs), the US economy grew by 3.3 per cent in the second quarter of 2025, quarter-on-quarter, from -0.5 per cent in the previous quarter. The UK economy grew by 0.3 per cent in the second quarter of 2025 compared to a 0.7 per cent growth in the previous quarter, and the Eurozone marginally grew by 0.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2025 compared to a 0.6 per cent growth in the previous quarter. Inflation in AEs showed mixed trends in August 2025. In the US, it edged up to 2.9 per cent from 2.7 per cent in July, while it remained unchanged at 3.8 per cent in the UK and 2 per cent in the Eurozone. Since the last Monetary Policy Consultative Committee meeting, interest rates in some AEs have moderated with the US and the UK effecting 25 basis point (bps) rate cuts to 4.0 - 4.25 per cent and 4.0 per cent, respectively.

On the regional front, the South African economy expanded by 0.8 per cent in the second quarter of 2025, quarter-on-quarter, following a 0.1 per cent growth in the previous quarter. The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) revised up its growth forecast to 1.2 per cent (from 0.9 per cent forecasted in July) for 2025 and 1.4 per cent (from 1.3 per cent) for 2026. The forecast for 2027 was revised down to 1.9 per cent (from 2.0 per cent). South Africa's inflation decreased to 3.3 per cent in August 2025 from 3.5 per cent in July 2025. The SARB revised up its inflation forecasts to 3.4 per cent (from 3.3 per cent forecasted in July) for 2025, 3.6 per cent (from 3.3 per cent) for 2026 and 3.1 per cent (from 3.0) for 2027. The SARB maintained the repo rate at 7.0 per cent during its 18th September 2025 meeting.

Eswatini's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 3.0 per cent in 2024 compared to a growth of 3.5 per cent in 2023. On a quarterly basis, GDP recorded a year-on-year decline of 0.3 per cent (seasonally adjusted) in the first quarter of 2025, compared to a revised growth of 1.7 per cent in the previous quarter. This negative growth performance was largely driven by poor performance in the primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector contracted by 7.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2025 from a growth of 7.2 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024 whilst the secondary sector also contracted by 10.2 per cent in the quarter ended March 2025, from 4.5 per cent in the previous quarter. The tertiary (services) sector, rebounded strongly with a year-on-year growth of 7.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2025, up from 0.4 per cent in the previous quarter. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, economic activity grew by 0.5 per cent (seasonally adjusted), from a revised decrease of 1.6 per cent in the previous quarter.

Headline consumer inflation eased to 2.6 per cent in August 2025 from 2.8 per cent in July 2025. The moderation was mainly supported by a decline in the price index for food, which declined to 1.4 per cent in August 2025, from 1.8 per cent in the previous month and the 'transport' index which remained in the deflationary zone as fuel prices remain contained. Other disinflationary pressures were noted in the price indexes for 'clothing & footwear' and 'household furniture & maintenance', which fell by a cumulative 2.5 percentage points during the period under review. In contrast, increases in the price indexes for 'recreation & culture', restaurants & hotels' and 'miscellaneous goods & services', somewhat counteracted the above declines. The Bank made a downward revision to its short-term inflation forecast for 2025 from 3.49 per cent forecasted in July to 3.24 per cent. The revision was mainly on account of lower food inflation outturn, stronger exchange rate assumption and the lower oil prices. Further, for the medium-term forecasts, a downward revision was made for 2026 to 3.78 per cent from a forecast of from 3.95 per cent for 2026. The forecast for 2027 was unchanged at 3.71 per cent.

Credit extended to the private sector decreased slightly by 0.6 per cent month-on-month to close at E21.5 billion at the end of July 2025. The observed fall was driven by credit to households & non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) which fell by 2.0 per cent to settle at E8.7 billion in July 2025 and credit to the business sector that registered a marginal decline of 0.6 per cent to E11.6 billion. In contrast, credit extended to other institutional sectors of the domestic economy registered a robust growth in July 2025, rising by 13.2 per cent to reach E1.1 billion at the close of July 2025. Despite the slight decrease, private sector credit increased by 8.1% on a year-on-year basis. The performance of the banking sector's loan portfolio deteriorated in July 2025. Nonperforming loans (NPLs) increased by 0.2 per cent month-on-month and 14.1 per cent year-on-year to reach E1.3 billion. The NPL ratio rose to 7.2 per cent at the end of July 2025, reflecting an uptick of 0.2 of a percentage point month-on-month and 0.3 of a percentage point year-on-year.

As of 12th September 2025, gross official reserves stood at E12.2 billion, equivalent to an import cover of 3.0 months. At the end of August 2025, total public debt stood at E38.4 billion, which is equivalent to 40.2 per cent of GDP. This reflects a growth of 4.2 per cent from the E36.83 billion recorded in July 2025.

The Bank will continue to monitor international, regional and domestic developments and will act appropriately in line with its mission to foster price and financial stability that is conducive to the economic development in Eswatini.

Dr. Phil Mnisi
GOVERNOR





Eswatini validates M&E Policy

... This seeks to anchor national development

By Delisa Magagula

THE Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD) successfully concluded a two-day validation workshop for the country's National Evaluation Policy and the National Development Plan (NDP) Monitoring and Evaluation (ME) Framework. This achievement is a firm declaration of the nation's commitment to making decisions based on solid evidence and ensuring governance is focused on tangible results.

The workshop, which was warmly opened and blessed by Under Secretary Siboniso Masilela, representing Principal Secretary Thabsile Mlangeni, highlighted the government's unwavering dedication to transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.

The acting Principal Secretary extended his sincere welcome and thanked the attendees for their commitment to the process, underscoring the collective importance of the initiative.

The journey to developing the ME Policy was a comprehensive, collaborative effort. It brought together experts from various government ministries, with essential support and partnership from UNICEF Eswatini and CLEAR-AA.

Through a series of focused capacity development workshops, co-creation sessions, and an in-depth review of key government documents, the policy was carefully tailored to meet Eswatini's specific needs and future aspirations.

This cooperative approach ensured that the final policy was not an isolated document, but a framework built on broad ownership and shared understanding across the government.

The ME Policy is designed to be clear, direct, and empowering. It provides a clear outline of what is required to achieve the government's national goals and objectives, without being overly prescriptive about how each entity must execute those requirements.

This strategic flexibility is key. It enables all Ministries, Departments, and Parastatals (MDPs) to work together seamlessly, fostering a unified effort that drives progress and economic growth while respecting each en-

tity's operational autonomy.

By prioritizing quality assurance, clear communication, and, most importantly, the active use of evaluation findings, the government is establishing a mechanism to ensure its decisions are consistently informed, effective, and truly responsive to the needs of the Eswatini people.

The second and final day of the validation workshop sustained an atmosphere of focused collaboration and anticipation.

Building on the momentum from the initial sessions, participants engaged in fruitful and in-depth discussions focused on refining and solidifying the framework.

Under the expert guidance of Consultant Nokwazi Mathebula, key stakeholders meticulously revisited the objectives of the ME Policy.

This crucial review ensured that the policy remained fully aligned with the long-term aspirations and immediate needs of the nation.

Participants actively shared their insights and provided essential feedback, repeatedly highlighting the importance of creating a policy that not only sets clear expectations but also genuinely empowers all ministries to collaborate effectively.

The day's discussions strongly reaffirmed the significance of transparency and accountability within governance.

By establishing robust quality assurance measures and embedding the systematic use of evaluation findings, the ME Policy aims to cultivate an environment where informed and evidence-based decisions can flourish, ultimately leading to tangible benefits for the citizens of Eswatini.

The successful validation of the M&E Policy and NDP ME Framework marks a major turning point toward a brighter, more sustainably managed future for Eswatini.

With this strong foundational framework now in place, the government is well-positioned to systematically track progress against national goals, accurately identify areas that require improvement, and make robust, informed decisions that will benefit the entire nation.

As the workshop concluded, participants expressed their deep gratitude for the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to such a significant national initiative.

The validation is a powerful testament to



▲ The Minister of Economic Planning and Development Dr Tambo Gina's office has championed the country's National Evaluation Policy and the National Development Plan (NDP) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework.

the collective efforts of everyone involved, the collaborative government bodies, the supporting international partners, and the dedicated experts and serves as a clear indication of Eswatini's deep-seated dedication to good governance and rigorous accountability.

Eswatini is now better equipped than ever to not just monitor but also to actively improve performance, identify and close gaps, and implement strategies that truly resonate with the needs of its people.

This collective achievement reinforces the government's commitment to results-driven public service.

Worth mentioning is that The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Eswatini developed a country programme document for the 2016-2020 period, established around objectives that were in line with the National Development Strategy 2013-2022, the King's Vision 2022 and the

United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes. UNDP's programme.

Eswatini planned to contribute to the following three outcomes.

Inclusive economic growth and sustainable development

Resilience and risk reduction, incorporating sustainable natural resource management and good governance, equity and citizen participation.

The UNDP country programme document for Eswatini identified priorities for UNDP's interventions that were highly relevant to the country's development challenges.

Although activities implemented by UNDP have too often deviated from its set objectives and planned outputs. New projects and activities offer opportunities to diversify and attract new funding in areas such as youth, innovation and energy efficiency, but also increase the risk of moving away from UNDP's programme objectives.

Tariffs could weaken, but not yet reverse, the dollar's reserve status

THE massive tariffs proposed by President Donald Trump on “Liberation Day” in April put the U.S. dollar’s role as the world’s anchor currency at risk, while the administration’s eventual climbdown to more modest rates has likely left it secure, new economic research has concluded.

The research found that the country’s “exorbitant privilege,” with the dollar’s role as a risk-free asset drawing investment to the U.S. and allowing the country to borrow at lower rates, is tightly bound to open trade that couples the fate of other economies to what happens in the U.S.

Protectionism would weaken that connection and the benefits that go with it, with a tariff rate of 26% estimated as a tipping point that would allow competing currencies like the euro to become more central to the global economy, authors including Boston University economics professor Tarek Hassan, San Francisco Fed vice president Thomas Mertens, and Jingye Wang of the Renmin University of China, concluded from their research.

The average rates imposed by Trump, estimated now at around 17% to 18%, stayed

in a range the authors said might weaken but not fully undermine the dollar’s role.

“The dollar emerges as the safest currency in the world because shocks that affect the United States move a large share of global demand,” the authors wrote, driving demand for dollars as a hedge against currency and other risks.

“This safe-haven feature of the U.S. dollar is the key force that lowers U.S. interest rates, makes it a destination for global investment, and the target of exchange rate stabilizations,” they wrote. “A sustained trade war would threaten this equilibrium.”

The research, released as part of a Brookings Institution economic conference this week, comes during heightened attention to the dollar’s role in the world and how that might change under Trump.

A New York Fed conference this week will examine the issue, while investors try to parse conflicting data for evidence of any change.

A recent decline in the value of the dollar could be a warning sign, yet at the same time yields on U.S. Treasuries have fallen and stocks have hit record highs - a sign of continued demand for dollar-based securities that somewhat allays concerns the U.S. was at risk of losing its global status.

But, the authors warned, that can’t be taken for granted, pointing to last spring when markets sank in tandem.

“The fact that U.S. equities, Treasury bonds, and the dollar lost value at a time of disruption for international markets represents a stark departure from the usual pattern in which the dollar appreciates in times of global stress,” the authors wrote, referring to the backlash to Trump’s original tariff plans in April. “The dollar’s status as a safe-haven currency relies critically on relatively free trade: isolating the U.S. economy from world trade flows mitigates the forces that make the U.S. dollar the safest currency in the world.”



▲ US President Donald Trump.

US plans to extend Africa trade deal by a year – Lesotho minister

LESOTHO’s trade minister said on Wednesday that the U.S. plans to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which gives the continent preferential access to U.S. markets, by a year, after returning from a visit to Washington. A slew of tariffs that U.S. President Donald Trump imposed on global trading partners on April 4 hit African countries hard. They were widely seen as the death knell for the quarter-century-old AGOA deal, putting millions of livelihoods at risk. Lesotho initially got hit with the world’s highest tariff of 50% on Trump’s so-called “Liberation Day”

- ruinous for the tiny mountain kingdom’s export-led development model, which was almost entirely dependent on textile factories selling jeans and T-shirts to the U.S. Trump reduced it to 15% in August. A Lesotho trade delegation visited the U.S. from September 15-19. Minister of Trade, Industry and Business Development Mokheleli Shelile, who led the delegation, told a news conference late on Wednesday that they met U.S. officials responsible for AGOA on the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. “They all agreed that AGOA has to be extended and they promised

us that by November or December [at] the latest, it will be extended by a year,” Shelile said. AGOA expires on September 30 and companies that benefit from it have warned that any delay in renewing it risked significant job losses and factory closures. Lesotho qualifies for textile and apparel benefits under AGOA, according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative. U.S. goods and services trade with Lesotho totaled \$276 million in 2024, up 4.6% from a year earlier. A White House spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment. (Reuters)

CoreWeave expands OpenAI pact with new \$6.5 billion contract

AI cloud provider CoreWeave has expanded its partnership with OpenAI in a new deal worth up to \$6.5 billion, bringing the total value of their agreements to \$22.4 billion, the latest in a series of billion-dollar deals OpenAI has signed to secure computational power. The agreement marks the third major expansion of the partnership between the two companies this year. The company behind ChatGPT struck an initial cloud deal with CoreWeave in March worth up to \$11.9 billion, followed by a \$4 billion add-on in May. The latest addition shows the deepening relationship between the two companies as OpenAI seeks multiple partners to help with an unprecedented data-center buildout to meet its growing computational demands.

The announcement follows major updates to OpenAI’s infrastructure project “Stargate”. OpenAI said Tuesday it will open three new sites with Oracle, its cloud partner with a \$300 billion deal over the next few years, and build two additional data centers with SoftBank. CoreWeave’s shares pared losses in premarket trading and were down about 4%. Reuters was first to report the news. “The combined capacity from these five new sites—along with our flagship site in Abilene, Texas, and ongoing projects with CoreWeave—brings Stargate to nearly 7 gigawatts of planned capacity and over \$400 billion in investment over the next three years,” OpenAI said in a blog post. OpenAI has said Stargate aims to secure a total of 10 gigawatts of capacity through an investment that could reach \$500 billion. (Reuters)



▲The company behind ChatGPT struck an initial cloud deal with CoreWeave in March worth up to \$11.9 billion, followed by a \$4 billion add-on in May.



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Seychelles president seeks reelection on back of economic recovery

VOTING began on Thursday in Seychelles' election, where incumbent President Wavel Ramkalawan and allied lawmakers are looking to block a comeback by the party that dominated politics for four decades.

Africa's wealthiest country per capita is an archipelago in the western Indian Ocean whose location makes it a target for investment from, and security cooperation with, China, Gulf nations and India.

Ramkalawan, a former Anglican priest, steered the tourism-dependent economy through a post-pandemic recovery, and says he wants a second five-year term to build social protections and infrastructure while defending the country's neutrality to draw investment.

His main rival, Patrick Herminie of the United Seychelles party that governed from 1977 to 2020, says the population of 120,000 suffers from problems such as soaring living costs, declining standards in schools, graft and drug abuse.

VOTE FOR CHANGE?

Over three days, about 73,000 voters will choose from eight presidential candidates and 125 challengers for the 35-seat National Assembly, where Ramkalawan hopes to maintain a majority for his Linyon Demokratik Seselwa coalition.

Voting began in the outlying islands and for some essential workers on Thursday,

with polling stations on the three main islands opening on Saturday. Results are due on Sunday.

Scores of essential workers queued to vote at the English River voting station in Victoria, the capital.

"I came to vote to remove the president," said Alberte, a police officer who declined to give his surname. "I did not like the things he did for the past five years, so I voted for a change."

Bus driver Gary Cado said he was happy with the government and wanted it to stay.

Long one of Africa's top economic performers thanks to tourism earnings and governance reforms, Seychelles has bounced back strongly from the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year it was removed from the EU's tax blacklist.

Inflation is less than 2% and public debt on course to drop below the government's target of 50% of gross domestic product before 2030, the International Monetary Fund says.

"We've embarked on an ambitious programme of taking care of our people," Ramkalawan told Reuters in an interview, pointing to an increased minimum wage, infrastructure projects and free school meals.

He hopes to build a new hospital and airport and a modern port, while relying on neutrality to maximise investment.

"We say keep your geopolitics to yourselves," Ramkalawan added. "A French war-



▲ President of Seychelles Wavel Ramkalawan addresses the "Summit of the Future" in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters in New York City, U.S.

ship, an American, British, Chinese, or Indian vessel, all are welcome. If India and China have problems, those are not ours."

WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATIONS

Herminie, a doctor and former National Assembly speaker, has overcome unusual legal challenges, such as his 2023 arrest for trying to stage a coup with the help of witchcraft. He denied the charges, which were lat-

er dropped.

Herminie says the government has presided over spreading corruption, citing the lease of two islands to companies from Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

He told Reuters his party had learned from its 43 years in power, when it faced corruption accusations of its own.

(Reuters)

Kenya eyes US trade deal by end of year, seeks five-year extension to Africa pact

KENYA'S President William Ruto said on Wednesday his country expects to sign a trade, opens new tab deal with the United States by year-end and that he will be pushing Washington to extend its duty-free agreement with Africa for at least five years.

Ruto will be meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio later on Wednesday to discuss the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), he said in an interview on the sidelines of the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York. The 25-year-old act grants qualifying African nations duty-free access to the U.S. market and is due to expire this month.

"I will be asking him for the U.S. to consider seriously renewing and extending AGOA for at least a minimum of five years, because it is a platform that connects Africa and the U.S. in a very fundamental way, and it can go a long way in solving some of the trade deficits and challenges that exist at the moment," Ruto said.

Ruto said he believes the U.S. administration has increased its appreciation for AGOA.

A bipartisan effort to secure a further extension to AGOA last year did not get a vote in Congress. President Donald Trump's return to the White House in January, with his tariff-driven trade policy, has further cast doubt on an extension.

"AGOA gives both Africa and the U.S. the best chance to expand and deepen trade," Ruto said.



▲ William Ruto, President of Kenya, speaks during an interview with Reuters at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations, during the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, U.S.

ACCESS TO US MARKETS

The U.S. and Kenya have made "good progress" on a bilateral trade agreement, Ruto said, adding that he expects to sign a deal before the end of 2025. In April, Trump imposed a 10% tariff on Kenyan, opens new tab goods.

Kenya is looking for access to the U.S. market for its apparel, textile and agricultural products including tea, coffee and avocados. Ruto wants to explore new areas including mining and fishing. If a deal is reached, it would be the first of its kind between a sub-Saharan African nation and Washington.

Ruto said Kenya has robust trade agreements with several partners,

including China which has removed all tariffs from the East African country's agricultural products.

"We have a trade deficit in favor of China, but the one for the U.S. is fairly balanced, so we are still looking at avenues on how to balance trade with all our trading partners."

CONFLICTS IN THE DRC AND HAITI

On the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ruto said a proposal has been made for the U.S., Qatar, the East African Community and the South African Development Community to come together next month to discuss the situation.

(Reuters)

Congo, Rwanda eye October start to security measures under Trump-backed peace deal

DEMOCRATIC Republic of Congo and Rwanda agreed to start implementing security measures under a U.S.-mediated deal next month, the countries said in a joint statement on Wednesday, in what would be a key step toward carrying out the peace agreement amid concerns over lack of progress.

The agreement, reached in a meeting in Washington on September 17-18 and first reported by Reuters, would see implementation begin on October 1, according to the joint statement, which was also issued by the United States, Qatar, Togo and the African Union Commission.

The countries agreed to complete the measures by the end of the year, three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters. Operations to eliminate the threat from Congo-based armed group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and facilitate the withdrawal of Rwandan troops will begin between October 21 and 31, according to the sources.

The timeline offers specific dates for Rwanda and Congo to carry out the peace plan amid concerns it has faced headwinds.

The Congolese and Rwandan foreign ministers signed a peace deal in Washington on June 27

and met that same day with U.S. President Donald Trump, who is keen to draw billions of dollars of Western investment to a region rich in tantalum, gold, cobalt, copper, lithium and other minerals.

The deal included a pledge to implement a 2024 agreement that said Rwanda would lift defensive measures within 90 days.

Congolese military operations targeting the FDLR, a Congo-based armed group that includes remnants of Rwanda's former army and militias that carried out the 1994 genocide, are meant to conclude over the same timeframe.

The initial 2024 agreement's 90-day deadline falls on Thursday. One of the sources said the clock did not start ticking when the agreement was signed, but rather was meant to start with the first meeting of a new joint security coordination mechanism on August 7-8.

At the September meeting in Washington, Congo and Rwanda negotiated an operational order to advance that 2024 agreement and agreed to begin implementation on October 1, according to the joint statement.

The members of the joint security coordination mechanism also exchanged intelligence to establish an understanding of the situation on the ground, (Reuters)

Airport runway close calls spur hopes for wider adoption of cockpit alert technology

AS a Boeing 757 aircraft prepared to land, an audio alert started blaring in the cockpit: "Traffic on runway! Traffic on runway!" Seconds later, the same warning popped up on the navigation display.

It prompted the pilot to abort the landing to avoid a possible collision. The alert was triggered by a smaller Gulfstream jet that was on the runway.

This was not a real-world incident but a staged test flight of Honeywell's, opens new tab new cockpit safety system designed to prevent incidents like a near-collision between a Southwest Airlines, aircraft and a private jet at Chicago's Midway Airport in February and a crash at Tokyo's Haneda Airport last year.

The technology known as SURF-A, or Surface-Alert, is the long-awaited addition to runway safety solutions that have been on the market for nearly two decades, but until recently failed to attract many customers.

But with recent high-profile runway incidents creating a new climate of safety concern, pressure is building on aviation authorities to make cockpit alert systems mandatory.

COCKPIT ALERTS SEEN BOOSTING AVIATION SAFETY

Japan has submitted a working paper, opens new tab to the ongoing triennial policy-setting meeting of global aviation leaders, highlighting cockpit alert systems as a crucial safety measure for preventing runway incursions. The paper was drafted in response to the Haneda crash.

The National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates all civil aviation accidents, has been consistently recommending it.

Southwest, which began using the technology this year, attests to the benefits. The Dallas-based airline has seen a significant improvement in its key safety performance

'ChatGPT, what stocks should I buy?' AI fuels boom in robo-advisory market

AS ChatGPT nears its third birthday, at least one in 10 retail investors is using a chatbot to pick stocks, fuelling a boom in the robo-advisory market, but even fans say it is a high-risk strategy that cannot replace traditional advisors just yet.

Thanks to artificial intelligence, anyone can select stocks, monitor them and obtain investment analysis that was once only available to big banks or institutional investors.

The robo-advisory market - which includes all companies providing automated, algorithm-driven financial advice such as fintech, banks and wealth managers - is forecast to grow to \$470.91 billion in revenues in 2029 from \$61.75 billion last year, marking a roughly 600% increase, according to data analysis firm Research and Markets.

NO ACCESS TO INFORMATION BEHIND A PAYWALL

Jeremy Leung, who spent almost two decades analysing companies for UBS, has been using ChatGPT to chase stocks for his multi-asset portfolio since he left the Swiss bank late last year.

"I no longer have the luxury of a Bloomberg (terminal), or those kinds of market-data services which are very, very expensive," Leung said.

"Even the simple ChatGPT tool can do a lot and replicate a lot of the workflows that I used to do," he said, cautioning that such a tool might however miss some crucial analyses as it can't access data behind a paywall.



▲ A view of the cockpit aboard a Honeywell's Boeing 757 aircraft, featuring a new runway safety solution SURF-A, or Surface-Alert, which is expected to receive certification from the Federal Aviation Administration in 2026, during a test flight in Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.

indicators since the system came on board, Southwest's vice president of safety and security, Dave Hunt, told Reuters.

The U.S. carrier began installing the system in spring and now has it on almost all of its 800 aircraft. "We feel this is a very important and effective layer to prevent runway incursions, runway collisions," Hunt said.

The International Civil Aviation Organization lists runway collisions or incursions among the top five risks to aviation safety. Runways were involved in 42% of accidents worldwide between 2019 and 2023, the ICAO, a United Nations agency, said.

The Federal Aviation Administration recorded almost five incursions or incorrect movements of planes or other objects per

day in the fiscal year 2024.

'ANOTHER LAYER OF PROTECTION'

The SURF-A technology uses GPS, automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) data, and advanced analytics to identify other aircraft on or near the runway that could cause a collision within the next 30 seconds.

Unlike systems that alert only air-traffic control, it provides aural and visual alerts directly to pilots in the cockpit. Based on the flight test results, Honeywell expects the FAA to approve the technology next year.

"It's another layer of protection," said Honeywell senior test pilot Kirk Vining. "It gives us more margin for safety."

Airbus and Boeing are also working on runway-safety alerts for their aircraft. Cam Morast, lead product manager at avionics safety company Aviation Communication & Surveillance Systems, said his company is testing a surface alert technology, which will be available as a standard feature on new Airbus aircraft starting in 2028.

An FAA panel last year recommended requiring cockpit alert systems for newly manufactured aircraft. While the panel failed to reach a consensus on a retrofit mandate, it urged aircraft operators to make every effort to install the technology on their aircraft. It noted that safety was improved when aircraft were equipped with capabilities providing alerts to the flight crew.

Yet, doubts remain over how many airlines would be willing to invest in solutions like SURF-A without a regulatory mandate.

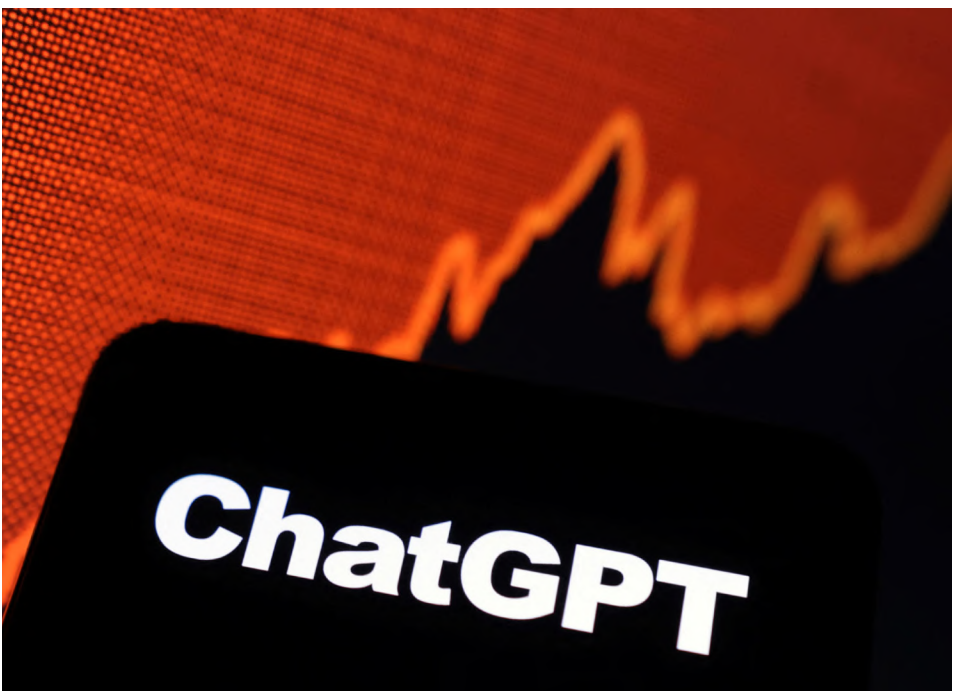
Safety experts say the system's effectiveness relies on broad implementation across an airline's fleet, which involves retrofitting older aircraft, maintenance planning, training for pilots and regulatory approval. It entails significant costs for carriers.

"It's easier with the new fleet," said Hassan Shahidi, chief executive at safety group Flight Safety Foundation. "Retrofitting the existing fleet is very challenging."

COST CONCERNS SLOW ADOPTION RATE

The costs and efforts involved in upgrading safety features stymied the adoption of Honeywell's previous runway safety solutions. In 2012, it launched smartRunway and smartLanding technology, known as Smart-X, to boost situational awareness of pilots during taxi, take-off and landing.

The technology was designed to prevent incidents such as the one in 2017 when an Air Canada, opens new tab flight mistakenly lined up to land on a taxiway instead of the assigned runway at San Francisco International Airport, nearly colliding with four other aircraft waiting to take off. (Reuters)



▲ ChatGPT logo and rising stock graph are seen in this illustration.

businesses, with criteria such as levels of debt, sustained growth and assets that generate an advantage over competitors.

The selection of 38 stocks, which includes AI posterchild Nvidia ns new tab alongside consumer staples like Procter & Gamble and Walmart, has surged nearly 55% so far, almost 19 percentage points more than the average of the UK's 10 most popular funds, including those managed by Vanguard, Fidelity, HSBC and Fundsmith.

Granted, U.S. stocks are around record highs and right now, seem invulnerable to erratic U.S. policies and patchy economic data. But stock picking using ChatGPT requires some financial knowledge and its adopters say there is a high risk of getting it wrong before getting it right.

Leung creates prompts like "assume you're a short analyst, what is the short thesis for this stock?" or "use only credible sources, such as SEC filings". (Reuters)

'USE ONLY CREDIBLE SOURCES'

Finder asked ChatGPT in March 2023 to select a basket of stocks from high-quality

DENMARK said on Thursday that drone incursions overnight, which briefly closed two airports and affected military installations, were hybrid attacks aimed at spreading fear, though authorities could not identify the perpetrators.

The incident, the second in two days in Denmark alone, is part of what some European officials see as a pattern of Russian disruption that has exposed the vulnerability of European airspace at a time of high tensions between Moscow and NATO.

Poland shot down suspected Russian drones in its airspace on September 10. Danish authorities said on Thursday they decided not to take down any of the drones in their airspace for safety reasons, despite the disruption caused to air traffic.

Russia's embassy in Copenhagen rejected as "absurd" speculation about Moscow's involvement in the Danish incursions.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said she had spoken on Thursday with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte about the drone incidents and that they had agreed to work together to ensure security.

DENMARK'S UNPREPAREDNESS IN FOCUS

The incursions forced Aalborg airport, used for commercial and military flights, to shut for three hours, while Billund airport, Denmark's second-largest, was closed for an hour, police said. Both reopened on Thursday morning.

Drones were also seen near Esbjerg and Sonderborg airports, as well as Skrydstrup airbase, home to Denmark's F-16 and F-35 fighter jets, and over a military facility in Holstebro, police confirmed. They are all located in the western Jutland region.

"This shows at least that we do not have the capacity at present to prevent the intrusion of drones over our airports," Peter Viggo Jakobsen, an associate professor at the Royal Danish Defence College, told Reuters.

Former French President Sarkozy handed 5-year jail term in stunning downfall

FORMER French president Nicolas Sarkozy was sentenced to five years in jail on Thursday for criminal conspiracy over attempts to raise campaign funds from Libya and will soon become the first former president of France to serve time in prison.

The sentence was harsher than many expected and Sarkozy, who was president between 2007-2012, will spend time in jail even if he appeals the ruling - which he said he would do.

As he exited the courtroom, Sarkozy, visibly moved, expressed his anger at what he said was a "scandalous" ruling.

"What happened today ... is of extreme gravity in regard to the rule of law, and for the trust one can have in the justice system," he told reporters.

"If they absolutely want me to sleep in jail, I will sleep in jail, but with my head held high," he said, adding that he was innocent. "I will not apologise for something I didn't do."

Sarkozy was found guilty of criminal conspiracy over efforts by close aides to procure funds for his 2007 presidential bid from Libya during the rule of late dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

He was acquitted by the Paris court of all other charges, including corruption and receiving illegal campaign financing.

SARKOZY WILL GO TO JAIL

However, the prison sentence is enforceable immediately, with the judge saying Sarkozy would have just a short period to put his affairs in order before prosecutors call on him to head to jail. That should happen within a month.

Sarkozy, who has always denied the charg-



Drones disrupt Danish airports again, Russia denies involvement

"This is a hole in our preparedness."

The incursions come after Denmark this year its military budget to address acute shortcomings. Last week, it announced plans to acquire long-range precision weapons, while its decision to host Ukrainian missile fuel production near the Skrydstrup airbase has drawn criticism from Russia.

Police said the drones followed a similar pattern to those that halted flights at Copenhagen airport overnight into Tuesday.

"It certainly does not look like a coincidence. It looks systematic. This is what I would define as a hybrid attack," Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen told a press conference, adding that Denmark faced no direct military threat.

The head of Denmark's armed forces, Michael Hyldgaard, acknowledged weaknesses

in the country's ability to counter drone attacks: "We have a wide range of capabilities in the Armed Forces, but we would like to have more."

Danish opposition lawmaker Pelle Dragsted of the Red-Green Alliance slammed the government's handling of the incidents, saying on X: "Billions (are being) allocated to defence ... But no control over the most basic thing: Defence of our own vulnerable infrastructure."

DENMARK HAS POINTED FINGER AT RUSSIA

Prime Minister Frederiksen called the Copenhagen incident the most serious "attack" yet on Denmark's critical infrastructure and linked it to suspected Russian drone activities across Europe, though no evidence was provided.

Authorities in Norway also shut the airspace at Oslo airport for three hours on Monday evening after reports of a drone flying in the area.

Danish analyst Jakobsen also pointed the finger at Moscow.

"So the Russians - if it's them, and I think it is - are doing what they've been really good at for a long time: they're going right to the edge of what would trigger a military response from NATO, but not over it," he said.

Poulsen stressed on Thursday that there was no evidence linking the recent drone activities to Russia. He also said Denmark had not yet decided whether to follow Poland's example this month and invoke NATO's Article 4, which allows members to request consultations over any security concerns.

(Reuters)



▲ Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy arrives for the verdict in his trial with other defendants on charges of corruption and illegal financing of an election campaign related to alleged Libyan funding of his successful 2007 presidential bid, at the courthouse in Paris, France.

es, was accused of making a deal with Gaddafi in 2005, when he was France's interior minister, to obtain campaign financing in exchange for supporting the then-isolated Libyan government on the international stage.

The judge said there was no proof that Sarkozy made such a deal with Gaddafi, nor that money that was sent from Libya reached Sarkozy's campaign coffers, even if the timing was "compatible" and the paths the money went through were "very opaque".

But she said Sarkozy was guilty of criminal conspiracy for having let close aides get in touch with people in Libya to try and obtain campaign financing.

The 70-year-old has been on trial since January in a case he said was politically motivated.

The court found him guilty of criminal conspiracy between 2005 and 2007. After that he was president and covered by presidential immunity, the court added.

This was the second time this year that a French court handed down a ruling with immediate effect on a major political figure.

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen was convicted in March of embezzling EU funds and given an immediate five-year ban on running for office.

Le Pen was prompt to react to Sarkozy's sentencing, saying it was "a grave danger" that judges were opting for immediately enforceable rulings and not waiting for appeals.

SARKOZY'S LEGAL WOES

Despite his legal battles, and having his Legion of Honour, France's highest distinction, stripped in June, Sarkozy remains an influential figure on the French political stage.

He recently met with his former protegee, Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu, and has also lent credibility to Le Pen's National Rally (RN), saying the far-right, anti-immigrant party now forms part of the "republican arc."

Sarkozy has faced several legal battles since leaving office.

Last year, France's highest court upheld his conviction for corruption and influence peddling, ordering him to wear an electronic tag for a year, a first for a former French head of state. The tag has now been removed.

Also last year, an appeals court confirmed a separate conviction for illegal campaign financing over his failed re-election bid in 2012. A final ruling from France's highest court is expected on that case next month.

Vincent Brengarth, lawyer for economic justice campaign group Sherpa, which was party to the Libya trial, welcomed the ruling. "This confirms we have an independent justice system, that can be brave," he said.

(Reuters)



Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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THIS weekend is set to be a vibrant lineup of entertainment in Eswatini.

Dive into the festivities and make the most of your time. Eswatini Daily News has put together a comprehensive guide to the weekend's events for you to explore and enjoy.

►► ECOFEST

When: Friday

Where: SibaniSami Hotel

When: Friday

Fee: E150

Founded by the charismatic Bonginkosi Dlamini, popularly known as Dr Shakes, ECOFEST, set for September 26, 2025, has quickly become a beacon for comedy in Southern Africa. Now entering its second edition, the festival aims to surpass the success of its inaugural event by expanding its reach and impact. ECOFEST will feature a stellar lineup of comedians, including Bongiswa, Darren, Boldwin Bals, and Ndosh, among others. These performers represent a vibrant cross-section of comedic styles and backgrounds, promising a night that caters to a wide range of humour preferences. The event will serve as a prelude to the main festival, scheduled to take place at the Sibane Sami Hotel in Ezulwini, further amplifying the excitement surrounding ECOFEST 2025. Ticket sales are already underway, with early bird tickets priced at E120 available exclusively through Delta Pay. Pre-sale tickets will be sold at E150, while those purchasing at the gate can expect to pay E200. A significant new feature of ECOFEST 2025 is the introduction of a comedy search initiative targeting university students.

►► AFTERWORK CHILLOUT VIBES

When: Friday

Where: Mdzimba View Shisanyama

Fee: E70

DaMabusa is poised to captivate audiences at the upcoming Afterwork Chillout Vibes event. This event is scheduled for September 26, 2025, at Mdzimba View Shisanyama. The Afterwork Chillout Vibes event will not only showcase DaMabusa but also feature an impressive lineup of supporting acts. Artists like Thulas, Lady Zee, Tap Tap, Tracksoul, MaWillies, Bandora, and Slim Deep will bring a rich variety of sounds and styles to the stage, ensuring a diverse and engaging musical experience for attendees. Castle will also be present, adding to the festive atmosphere. Ticket pricing for the event is designed to accommodate a wide audience. General entry costs E70 before 9 pm and E100 after, while VIP tickets are priced at E200 before 9 pm and E300 thereafter. This pricing structure allows fans to choose their preferred experience, whether it be an intimate VIP setting or the lively general admission area.

►► SWAZI PLAZA NIGHTS

When: Friday

Where: Swazi Plaza

Fee: Free

Swazi Plaza Nights is gearing up for an electrifying evening on September 26, 2025, featuring some of the most exciting talents in the local music scene. The event, free to the public and hosted by Mainstream, promises to deliver a memorable experience with performances by Upscale Live stars As 4 Jerry P, Lyrikal Busta, and Virtuousouls. As 4 Jerry P is an emerging multi-talented artist who has been making

waves with his hit single 'Mlentengamunye.' Fresh off his victory at the ENCAC Talent Show, he brings fresh energy and creativity to the stage, captivating audiences with his unique style and compelling performances. Alongside him, Virtuousouls, a dynamic DJ and producer duo, will take the crowd on a musical journey. Known for their innovative fusion of genres, Virtuousouls push the boundaries of electronic music, redefining the soundscape with their eclectic beats and captivating rhythms. Adding to the star power is Lyrikal Busta, a multi-award-winning musician celebrated for his mastery of Afrobeat and hip-hop. With a rich catalogue of hits, Lyrikal Busta's presence guarantees a night filled with crowd favourites and powerful performances. Together with his fellow Upscale Live stablemates, he will deliver an unforgettable set that highlights the best of contemporary Swazi music.

►► ALL BLACK PARTY

When: Friday

Where: 23:28 Lounge

Fee: Free

Thembinkosi Mthethwa, a multifaceted talent known for his roles as an actor on Ekhaya, businessman, voiceover artist, and producer, is set to electrify Mbabane with the much-anticipated 2025 edition of his signature event, the All-Black Party. Scheduled for Friday, September 26, this year's gathering promises to be a vibrant celebration of style, music, and community at the chic 23:28 Lounge located within the Checkers Business Park. With the theme "All Black" once again taking centre stage, Mthethwa assures attendees that the event will be "bigger and bolder" than ever before. The party aims to deliver an unforgettable

night filled with "grand vibes, good people, and great music," along with a few surprises that will keep guests talking long after the night ends. Adding to the excitement, this year's event will feature two charismatic MCs: Mdura, the popular comedian, known for his sharp wit and engaging stage presence, and Flame Masco, a gifted Afro-pop vocalist and producer whose beats are set to energise the crowd. The musical lineup is a showcase of local talent, featuring a dynamic mix of artists and DJs including Young Zesh, M Nation, Zulu D, DJ Cup, DJ Mbo, DJ Cybos, Thick B, Tibza, and the dance sensation Kiizdance. Attendees can also look forward to surprise guest performers, adding an element of mystery and thrill to the night.

►► ITALLO LIVE

When: Friday

Where: Mountain View International Hotel

Fee: E350

Acclaimed Afro-Jazz trumpeter Itallo, a multi-award winner, will deliver his mesmerising jazz performance at the Mountain View International Hotel on September 26, 2025.

He will be joined by a talented lineup of musicians including Zwile on saxophone, Musa Cage Dlamini on keyboards, Ndumiso Ndura Mamba on bass, Sihlanganiso Tariibo Dube on drums, and Joseph Bwalya on guitar. This highly anticipated event, hosted by The Jazz Gallery, will commence at 7 pm. and tickets are available for E350. Itallo has garnered acclaim for his soulful trumpet playing, which masterfully weaves traditional African rhythms with contemporary jazz influences. His performances are not merely concerts; they are celebrations of

life and culture, showcasing a profound connection to African musical traditions. With a rich discography and a reputation for electrifying live shows, Itallo has become a beloved figure in the jazz community. Fans can look forward to an exciting twist at the upcoming event, as Itallo is set to unveil some new music alongside his classic hits. This blend of the old and the new promises to create a dynamic and engaging experience for attendees.

►► EMAKHAYA ALBUM PRE-PARTY

When: Saturday

Where: MJ Lodge & Lifestyle, KaNcesi

Fee: E50

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 celebrations. 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.



What's
happening
this weekend?

Amapiano star has not been arrested – JCPS

JOHANNESBURG - Government's Justice, Crime, Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster has confirmed that Amapiano star Tebogo G. Mashego has not been arrested.

This follows a video circulating on social media showing the Biri Marung hitmaker being dragged into a police van.

According to JCPS, Mashego reportedly behaved strangely and acted violently, assaulting people for no clear reason.

JCPS emphasised that the singer's removal was a precautionary measure to protect both the public and Mashego, not an arrest. "Laudium SAPS members were summoned to the scene and, in the interest of public safety, had to forcefully remove him from the community as he was visibly resisting," the statement read.

Outburst

Meanwhile, Mashego continues to make headlines following his recent social media outburst.

It began when he went live on Instagram, claiming he was stuck in Nigeria after travelling there for a gig.

The 23-year-old musician pleaded for help to get a flight ticket to return home.

"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.

Fellow musician DJ Karri stepped in, confirming on his platforms that he had secured a ticket for Mashego's return flight.

On the live videos, Mashego also alleged that the Scorpion Kings, Maphorisa and Kabza De Small, owed him millions in unpaid royalties for the hit song Biri Marung. **Citizen**



▲ Tebogo G. Mashego.

Nketsi denies rumours of dating Khanyi Mbau's partner

JOHANNESBURG - Reality TV star Faith Nketsi has set the record straight on claims she is dating Khanyi Mbau's partner, Kudzai Mushonga.

Gossip blog Maphepha Ndaba claimed Nketsi was Mushonga's new flame, posting a picture of the two together. Nketsi has since denied the rumours, explaining that Mushonga and another man, who was cropped out of the picture, asked to take a photo with her. "Please neh. Since no one wants to come forward and say something, therefore creating a false narrative. I'm not with Kudzai. Never Will, Never Been And Never Would Be. Can a girl just travel in peace?" Nketsi wrote on her Instagram Stories.



▲ Faith Nketsi and Kudzai Mushonga.

Nketsi has not gone public with a relationship since her split from businessman Nzuzo Njilo, which ended in divorce in November 2023, less than a year after their April 2022 wedding. Nketsi and her Have Faith cast member and friend Andzelo Tivani are currently travelling. A few days ago, they jetted off to Germany for Drake's \$ome \$pecial \$hows 4 EU (\$\$\$4EU) tour, which made a stop in Hamburg. "24 hours in Germany to catch Drake concert," Nketsi wrote, captioning pictures and videos of their trip. On Wednesday, she shared more travel content from Italy, including a boat cruise and lunch at a beachside restaurant.

Citizen



▼ Cici.



Cici threatens legal action over unpaid royalties

JOHANNESBURG - 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.

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."

The South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO)

had not responded to requests for comment by the time of publication.

IOL

'Mamma' shows Zee Nxumalo's growth beyond Amapiano



▲ Zee Nxumalo is one of South Africa's rising Amapiano stars with hits like "Mali" and "Ngisakuthanda" under her belt. The 22-year-old star has been making waves with her distinctive sound.

KNOWN for her infectious energy, Zee Nxumalo is one of South Africa's rising Amapiano stars with hits like "Mali" and "Ngisakuthanda" under her belt. The 22-year-old star has been making waves with her distinctive sound.

With a growing presence on radio and social media, Nxumalo continues to push creative boundaries without letting the genre that shaped her keep her in a box.

Her new single "Mamma", featuring Sykes and Skillz, has already caught fire on the radio and TikTok.

Speaking to "Independent Media Lifestyle", she opened up about the inspiration behind the hit song, experimenting with new sounds and the lessons she has learned on her music journey so far.

"Honestly, it's such a beautiful feeling. When I was recording Mamma, I knew it was special but didn't know how fans would receive it. Seeing people dance to it on TikTok, singing along on the radio, and just vibing with the song makes me feel like my music is truly touching hearts. It reminds me why I do this," she said. The single features a hook that is a nod to Avicii's iconic "Levels". Nxumalo explains how they made it their own.

"That melody is iconic, and we wanted to honour it but also give it our own flavour. I grew up hearing it as a child, so the melody has always been stuck in my head.

She adds that while in the studio, it felt right to play around with the sample without overthinking it.

"We just asked, 'How would this sound if it was born in Africa?' and the result was 'Mamma'. It's familiar, but still fresh and ours."

"Mamma" is a love duet between Nxumalo and vocalist Sykes that blends African Dance with nostalgia. She shared that collaborating with Sykes and Skillz added energy to the song, bringing together two sides of a love story and taking it to the dance floor.

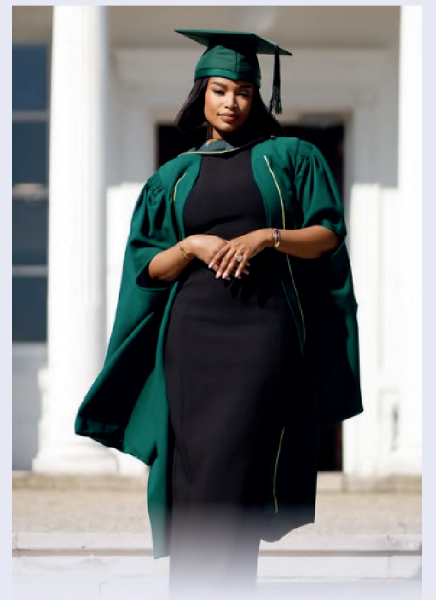
"I've always believed love songs have a special way of connecting people. With Mamma, I wanted to bring back that nostalgic, soulful feeling but still keep people dancing.

The Eswatini-born vocal powerhouse says the song shows her versatility beyond Amapiano because she does not want to limit herself as a creative.

While Amapiano is her foundation, she shared that music is broad and that she's constantly inspired by different sounds.

"With 'Mamma', I wanted to show that I can stretch myself creatively, experiment with new sounds, and still stay true to my essence. Growth means trying new things, and I think my fans are ready to take that journey with me," she said.

(IOL Entertainment)



Ayanda Thabethe celebrates MBA graduation

FROM tying the knot to bagging degrees!

South African TV presenter and award-winning media personality, Ayanda Matsimbe (née Thabethe), recently celebrated graduating from the prestigious Henley Business School.

The mother of two, who started her Master of Business Administration (MBA) in 2021, celebrated her graduation on Friday, September 19.

She shared the exciting news and a peek at her beautiful graduation attire on social media. "In London, on the 19th September, I walked the stage and graduated with my MBA from Henley Business School (University of Reading) and now I proudly join its circle of elite global business leaders. A monumental milestone and one for the books," she captioned her post. Congratulatory messages flooded her comment section from friends, family and fans, each revealing how proud they are of her for reaching this milestone.

Her sister, Lungile Thabethe, commented: "Sooo proud of you, my sissy! You are set apart! The best role model."

Model and Miss SA 2020, Shudufhadzo Musida, said: "Congratulations, queen."

Actress and DJ Thuli Phongolo added: "Yeah! SHE did THAT! So proud of you, mama!"

In another post, she thanked everyone who showed her immense support since she embarked on her educational journey.

"Grateful for the love and support of my husband, children, family and friends and of course all of you!! Thank you for the wonderful congratulatory messages - I read and felt them all, feeling immense gratitude and warmth. To God be the glory," she said. The 39-year-old also holds two degrees, namely, a BCOM Communication Management Degree as well as an Honours Marketing Degree.

One would say this is indeed Thabethe's year of winning as she tied the knot earlier this year to her husband, Peter Matsimbe.

The couple dated for four years before exchanging vows and got engaged in 2024.

The former "Top Billing" presenter also gave fans a glimpse of her intimate wedding, as she was surrounded by friends and family.

(IOL Entertainment)

Kanye West's Johannesburg Concert Ticket Details

PRE-SALE tickets for American rapper and singer-songwriter Kanye West, also known as Ye, Johannesburg concert have gone live on TicketPro.

West will have a one-day concert at Ellis Park Stadium on Saturday, December 13. The event is organised by the Monyake Group, a local live-entertainment company.

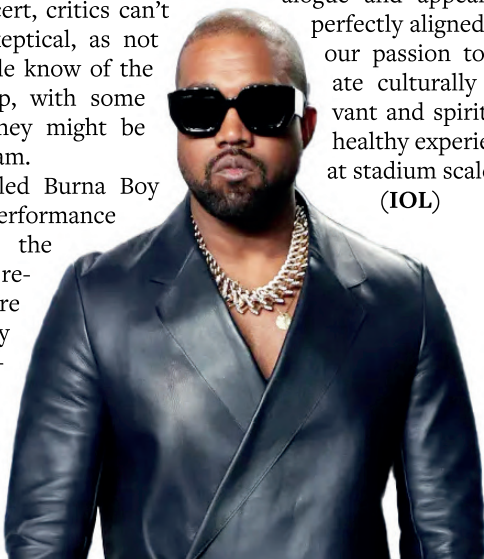
Prices for the concert start at R850 and range from R1 995,00 to R4 865,00.

For the pre-sale tickets, one had to register before getting an email that would have had a code to allow one to purchase a ticket. The pre-sale is only available for one day, until 9 pm.

While there is excitement for West's concert, critics can't help but be skeptical, as not too many people know of the Monyake Group, with some worried that they might be pulled into a scam.

After the failed Burna Boy South Africa performance last year and the Blue concert refund, people are trying to play things cautiously when spending money on tickets.

The Grammy award-winning artist was meant to perform on



▲ Pre-sale tickets for American rapper and singer-songwriter Kanye West, also known as Ye, Johannesburg concert have gone live on TicketPro.

September 23 at FNB Stadium, but due to pending legal proceedings, the event was postponed to December 16 and subsequently cancelled. British boy band Blue's South African concert was cancelled, but fans are still waiting for ticket refunds, with very little hope of receiving them as the company is set to be liquidated.

Monyake Group, in a previous interview with "Independent Media Lifestyle", expressed that they have a rich legacy in gospel and faith-based live production, and are capable of pulling off the show.

"We have a rich legacy in gospel and faith-based live production, and Ye's evolution as an artist, as well as his vast catalogue and appeal, are perfectly aligned with our passion to create culturally relevant and spiritually healthy experiences at stadium scale."

(IOL)



Mzansi Magic Launches New Reality Show 'Ngicel'iVisa'

MZANSI Magic is about to turn up the heat with its latest reality TV offering, and it's not for the faint-hearted.

On October 7 at 8pm, viewers will be introduced to Ngicel'iVisa, a bold new show that promises drama, heartbreak, and jaw-dropping revelations.

For those who don't know, "i-visa" is township slang for asking permission to "step out" of a relationship temporarily. And that's exactly what the show is about: couples giving each other a once-in-a-lifetime pass to explore unfinished business with an ex or a long-time crush.

Why would anyone agree to that? Reasons vary. For some, it's about being sure before saying "yes" to a marriage proposal. For others, it's about moving in together but needing to test whether old feelings are truly dead. Whatever the reason, one thing is certain, it's a rollercoaster of emotions.

The concept is as daring as it sounds. The partner requesting the "visa" spends one night away with their ex or crush.

The big question? What happens when they return? Do they

go back to their current relationship stronger, or is it game over?

Fronting the drama is none other than seasoned broadcaster and club DJ Warrick Stock, popularly known as DJ Warras.

His no-nonsense presence will guide couples and viewers through tough conversations and even tougher decisions. With each 24-minute episode packed with tension, raw truths, and relationship-defining moments, Ngicel'iVisa is not just entertainment; it's reality TV at its most daring.

Expect confessions, confrontations, and choices that could make or break love stories.

Mzansi Magic has never shied away from pushing the envelope, and with Ngicel'iVisa, it is taking viewers right to the edge of trust, temptation, and truth.

Mzansi's favourite dating show, Date My Family, is also coming back for its 13th season starting on October 12 at 6pm.

This acclaimed and proudly Mzansi show flips the script by letting singles meet the families of potential partners before meeting the partner.

(Sunday World)

Potato

ALTHOUGH you might be more interested in what’s inside the potato, its skin has fiber and tons of nutrients, like vitamins B and C, potassium, calcium, and iron.

Peach

The fuzzy skin on peaches is packed with antioxidants and vitamins. Not only that, it has lots of dietary fiber, too. Peach skin has loads of vitamin A. There are also carotenoids -- a kind of antioxidant and provitamin -- in peach skin. These could help lessen your chances of cataracts. You’ll be getting a good amount of fiber too, which helps your body digest food.

Eggplant

An eggplant’s skin has lots of antioxidants. This is especially true for eggplant varieties that are darker in color. For example, purple eggplant varieties will have more nutrients in their skin than the white varieties. You may find an eggplant’s skin a little too chewy to eat.

Watermelon

Watermelon rinds have an amino acid called citrulline. It can help get rid of nitrogen in your blood and can also help ease pain if you have sore muscles. In fact, the rind has more citrulline than the juicy flesh. If you’re not keen on eating the rind raw, there are other ways to prepare and eat it. You can pickle it, juice it, or stir fry it like a vegetable.

Apple

Interestingly, apple peels have more vitamins and fiber than what’s inside. Fiber is helpful for stopping cholesterol buildup in your blood vessels. There’s also an antioxidant called quercetin that can help your brain and lungs work better.

Cucumber

Most of a cucumber’s nutrients are in its dark green outer skin. It has lots of potassium, antioxidants, and fiber. The skin is also rich in vitamin K, a nutrient that supports bone health and blood clotting. But if the cucumber you want to eat isn’t organic and it has a heavy waxed coating, you might want to peel it anyway.

Kiwi

Kiwis have fuzzy, tough skin, but don’t let that stop you. You can scrape off the fuzz if you don’t like it. If you do eat the skin, you’ll get antioxidants, flavonoids (plant chemicals), and vitamin C. In fact, the skin has more of those nutrients than the inside does.

Zucchini

Zucchini peels can taste a little bitter, but they’re extremely nutritious. You’ll get fiber, potassium, and some extra vitamin C. The skin of a zucchini also has loads of antioxidants, like lutein, carotenoids, and zeaxanthin. You can reap the benefits of this veggie skin by combining them with other flavors, like in a salad, or by cooking them.

Fruit, veggie skins you can eat



Banana

Bananas have a peel that’s tough to eat and tastes bitter. Still, the peel has some great health benefits. It has potassium and antioxidants, like lutein. Lutein is good for eye health. Banana peels also have something called tryptophan, an amino acid. Since the skin is tough and bitter, you can boil it for a few minutes, then bake in the oven to dry it out for a tea or a smoothie.

Orange

Orange peels have an incredible amount of vitamin C -- twice the amount that’s inside the fruit. They’re also packed with vitamin B6, calcium, potassium, magnesium, and riboflavin (a B vitamin). Orange peels are hard to digest and they can be bitter. So, use a grater to make orange zest. You can zest in salad dressings or sprinkle it directly on top of a salad. The flavor of the zest also goes well with chocolate and ice cream.

WebMD

Benefits of Eating Vegetable & Fruit Skin/Peel

Here are the benefits to eating the skin of some fruits and vegetables:

1. Vitamins

The skin or peel contain high amounts of vitamins and. Vitamin A, C, and K particularly help nourish your body.

2. Weight loss benefits

Unpeeled fruits and vegetables offer 33% more fiber than peeled ones. This important because of viscous fiber, which is a specific type of fiber found in fruits and vegetables. It’s effective at reducing appetite. This helps you to feel fuller for longer by stretching your stomach and slowing down digestion. This lead to lower calorie consumption and weight loss. Eating the peels and skins of your fruits and vegetables is a great way to lose weight in a safe way. By being consistent, you can reach your goal weight.

3. Prevent diseases

Fruits and vegetables contain high levels

of antioxidants to protect your cells against harmful molecules, called free radicals. They are associated with heart disease and cancer among other conditions. Researchers found that antioxidants help to reduce these health risks. The skin and peel of fruits and vegetables contain especially high concentrations of antioxidants.

The antioxidants in skin and peels have also been linked to lowering cognitive diseases. High levels of antioxidants in your diet may help prevent Alzheimer’s and other dementias by keeping your brain sharp.

4. Reduce food waste

Fruit and vegetable skins are common items in the compost bin. By eating the peels and skins instead of tossing them away, you can help reduce the amount of food that goes to waste.

Tip: Consider turning them into their own tasty snack by drying them and turning them into chips.



WITH aging comes wisdom, perspective, and yes, changes that may sap your energy.

Even if you're not dancing quite as fast as you once did, there are ways you can keep that bounce in your step.

Focus on:

- Diet
- Exercise
- Sleep

Manage Your Menu

If you've been eating the same things for a while, take a fresh look at what's on your plate. The right types of food can raise your energy and make you feel better.

As you age, your body's ability to turn food into energy slows down. As a result, many put on weight. Still, you can help yourself stay fit and energetic.

Sugar levels play a big role. Some experts say "low-glycemic" foods, like beans, non-starchy veggies, nuts, and whole-grain products, can help keep your blood sugar in balance.

"High-glycemic" foods, like white rice, white bread, and sugar-sweetened drinks, can cause fast spikes in your blood sugar. You may feel a brief energy jolt, but when the dip comes, you may feel more drained than before.

Quantity Matters, Too

Too few calories can leave your body starved for energy. Too many can make you gain weight, which can make you feel sluggish.

How much you should eat each day depends on several things, especially how active you are. Talk to your doctor or a dietitian about how many calories you need.

Get Moving

You may notice you're working out less than you were when you were younger. Perhaps training for 5Ks has given way to after-dinner strolls.

The more active you are, the more energetic you'll feel. Exercise and physical activity are great ways to help your mood, too. If you have issues that stop you from doing the things you once enjoyed, feel free to get creative. If arthritis in your knees keeps you from running or playing basketball, swimming or cycling might work for you. You shouldn't stop moving as you get older. Just move in a different way. Look for fitness programs at local senior centers or find a partner so you can motivate each other. If you have trouble finding time to be active, maybe a workout first thing in the morning, before you do anything else, can do the trick. Just make sure you eat some breakfast first. Talk to your doctor before you begin a new routine.

Get Some Rest

For some of us, it's one of life's little jokes: When you retire and don't have to get up for work, you can't seem to sleep in anymore.

But getting enough shut-eye is important. Most people need about 7 hours a night. If you're not getting that much, for whatever reason, look for ways to adjust your nighttime routine. Try not to drink alcohol right before bedtime. While it might make you drowsy for a little while, it actually makes it harder to get a full night's sleep.

You should also:

- Finish all your caffeine by midafternoon.



Tips for more energy with age



- Turn off your computer, smartphone, and TV well before bedtime.
- Keep your bedroom as cool, dark, and quiet as possible.
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time as often as you can.
- If you still can't get enough sleep, talk with your doctor.

Try These Other Tips, Too

For a few more ways to improve energy and mood as you age, you might:

- Cut back on alcohol in general. As you age, its effects stay with you longer.

- Drink more water. If you're even a little dehydrated, it can sap your energy and affect your mood.

► Cut stress where you can. For example, try to scale back your to-do list if you feel like you are spread too thin. Turn off the TV and take a walk if the news is making you anxious.

If you're tired or depressed, talk to your doctor. Those things are not a normal part of aging. Another health problem may be to blame, like depression, heart disease, or sleep apnea. **WebMD**



▲ Demi Moore arrives for Gucci's exclusive screening of 'The Tiger', a short film directed by Spike Jonze and Halina Reijn during Milan Fashion Week.



▲ Gregg Donavan holds a sign that reads "Welcome back Jimmy" outside the theatre where "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" was recorded for broadcast after Disney announced that the show would return to its ABC network lineup following Kimmel's temporary suspension for his remarks about Charlie Kirk, in Los Angeles, California.



▲ A member of the Munich sausage test committee smells a traditional Bavarian sausage at the 190th Oktoberfest, the world's largest beer festival in Munich, Germany.

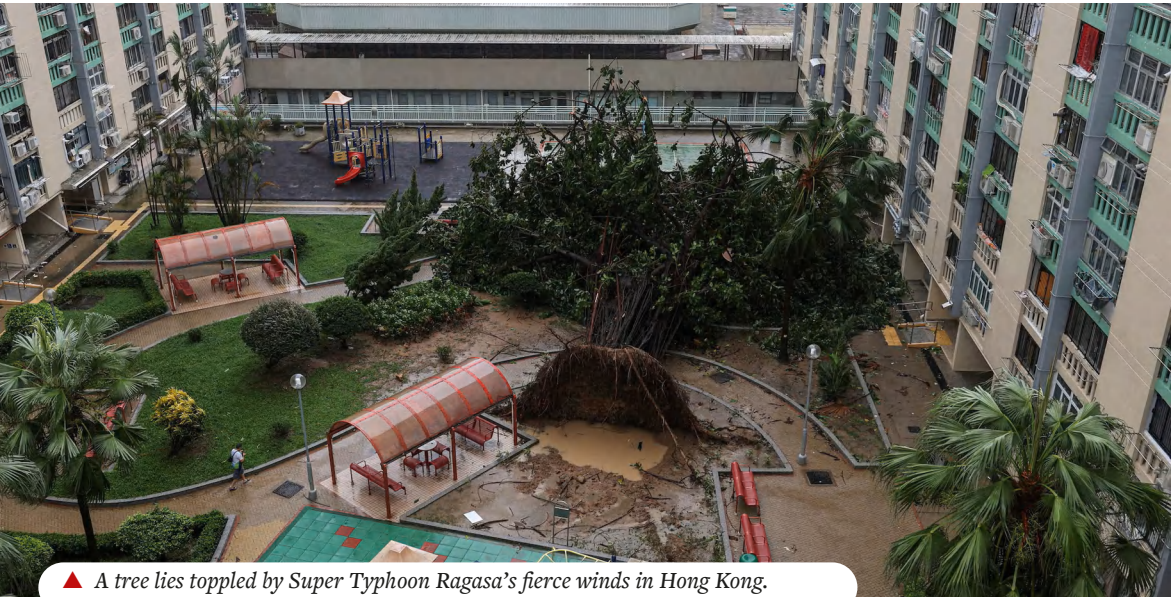
News In Pictures



▲ Law enforcement personnel respond at the scene of a shooting at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field office in Dallas, Texas.



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump addresses the 80th United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in New York City.



▲ A tree lies toppled by Super Typhoon Ragasa's fierce winds in Hong Kong.

McIlroy says Bryson matchup in Ryder Cup would be ‘wonderful’

RORY McIlroy says facing Bryson DeChambeau in a Ryder Cup grudge match would be “wonderful” after their verbal feud intensified this week, but he’s more concerned about Europe winning in America.

Europe talisman McIlroy, who won the Masters in April to complete a career Grand Slam, will lead the trophy holders against host United States starting Friday at Bethpage Black.

A war of words with American star DeChambeau began at the Masters, where two-time US Open winner DeChambeau vowed to chirp in McIlroy’s ear at the Ryder Cup.

McIlroy, a five-time major winner from Northern Ireland, said last month that DeChambeau, who plays in the Saudi-backed LIV series, can only attract attention by mentioning other golfers.

DeChambeau told Golf Channel on Monday that, “Whatever Rory says and whatnot is great. He didn’t mean anything by it. I hope we can have some good banter back and forth.”

McIlroy eased the spat Thursday, partly on orders from Europe captain Luke Donald, but was clear he’d be fine facing DeChambeau this week.

“I promised Luke I would only talk about the European team today. I’m going to stick to it,” McIlroy said.

“It’s so easy to play into narratives this week and to get swept up in this whole rivalries and Ryder Cup and whatever it is. All I want to do is go and try and put blue points



▲ Rory McIlroy.

on the board. I don’t care who it’s against.

“If I come up against Bryson at some point, I think that’s great. That’s wonderful for the championship and wonderful for us, as well, in some ways.”

McIlroy and his teammates have a goal of capturing the Cup on US soil for the fifth time and ending a run of lopsided host Cup wins since the epic Europe 2012 “Miracle at Medinah” fightback road triumph.

“Winning another away Ryder Cup, just

considering how hard that has been over the past 12 years, it would be one of the greatest accomplishments of my career for sure,” McIlroy said.

“Since 2012, you look at the results of the Ryder Cup, the home team has won every time, but they also have won convincingly. It has been pretty one-sided either way.

Whatever team, whether that’s Europe or America, that’s the one to break that duck, I think, is going to go down as one of the best

teams in Ryder Cup history.

“We have a wonderful opportunity this week but we also understand it’s going to be very difficult.”

On the eve of his eighth Cup appearance, the most of any golfer this week, McIlroy is part of a team that returns 11 of 12 players from the triumphant Rome squad.

“It has been a really cohesive group for the last three years,” McIlroy said. “We all know what to expect. We all know what our roles are... that has us prepared to give it a really good go this week.”

STRIKING A BALANCE

McIlroy says he is trying to find the right balance for engagement with spectators, who have already booed him with vigor in practice.

“At times in the Ryder Cup, I’ve engaged too much with the crowd, but then there’s times where I haven’t engaged enough,” he said. “So it’s really just trying to find the balance of using that energy from the crowd to fuel your performance.”

From cupping his hand to his ear and yelling, “I can’t hear you,” after making a long putt at Hazeltine in 2016 to being mellow at Whistling Straits in 2021, it’s a delicate touch.

“At Hazeltine I probably engaged too much at times,” McIlroy said. “And then Whistling Straits, I didn’t engage enough and felt pretty flat because of it.”

(Supersport)

Sinner eases past Cilic to launch China Open title bid

JANNIK Sinner beat Croatia’s Marin Cilic 6-2, 6-2 on Thursday to cruise into round two in Beijing on his first showing since losing the US Open final.

Next at the China Open the world number two from Italy faces qualifier Terence Atmane of France.

“We did a lot of work to be back in this position again, so I’m very happy,” Sinner said.

“I missed the competition. Of course, you are nervous, you have doubts and it’s normal... but you have to be also excited to go again on court.

“At the moment I feel great physically and mentally, which is the most important.”

The 36-year-old Cilic was looking to snap a winless run stretching back to the Wimbledon last 16.

The two were evenly matched in the first set until the 24-year-old Sinner broke for a 3-2 lead.

The Italian added the next two games without losing a point and closed the set with minimum fuss.

Sinner broke early to take control of the second set for a 2-1 lead and pushed that to 5-1, overpowering the 97th-ranked former US Open champion.

Four-time major champion Sinner secured a routine win when Cilic returned into the net.

“Big respect to him,” Sinner said. “I managed to break him quite early,



▲ Jannik Sinner.

which then gave me the confidence to continue.”

Sinner has vowed to introduce some unpredictability to his play after losing the New York final -- and top ranking -- this month to Carlos Alcaraz.

“I don’t think it’s pressure off or on,” Sinner, who won the Australian Open and Wimbledon this year, said of their rankings swap.

“I’m very, very happy with the season I have played, or am playing, because it was remarkable for my side

what I did, but also for what Carlos is doing.

“At the moment he deserves to be there, you know, it’s as simple as that. He played more tournaments and he played all tournaments very, very well.”

Sinner is vying for a third straight Beijing final after winning on his China Open debut in 2023, before losing last year’s decider to Alcaraz.

A WTA 1000 event is also taking place in Beijing.

(Supersport)



▲ Orlando Pirates coach Abdeslam Ouaddou.

Orlando Pirates coach to ring changes for Lioli clash

ORLANDO Pirates coach Abdeslam Ouaddou is set to ring in the changes when the Buccaneers take on Lioli in the second leg of the CAF Champions League preliminary round at the Orlando Stadium on Saturday (kickoff is at 3pm). The Buccaneers walloped the Lesotho champions 3-0 in the first leg at the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein last Saturday.

They therefore go into this encounter in Orlando as favourites to go through to the next round of the continental competition.

Ouaddou made some changes when Pirates played Sivelele FC in a Betway Premiership

clash midweek including starting Oswin Appollis, who scored the winner on the bench.

The Moroccan coach has explained that it is important to rotate his players to keep them fresh especially because the Buccaneers are competing in many competitions this season.

“It is important to have good management of players when you play in many competitions,” Ouaddou told reporters after the match against Sivelele before explaining why he started Appollis on the bench.

“We don’t want injuries” Appollis came on for Patrick Maswanganyi at the start of the second half and scored the winner in the 80th minute.

(Supersport)

Monchi exit ‘changes nothing’ for Emery at Aston Villa

Aston Villa manager Unai Emery said the sudden departure of long-time ally Monchi from the Premier League club will not affect his future.

Monchi, who previously worked alongside Emery at Sevilla, left his role as Villa’s president of football operations this week and was swiftly replaced by former Real Sociedad sporting director Roberto Olabe.

Villa have enjoyed a meteoric rise since Emery took charge in 2022, qualifying for European competition for the past three seasons and reaching the quarterfinals of last season’s Champions League.

However, they have made a terrible start to the new campaign after a frustrating summer transfer window in which they were hampered by financial sustainability rules.

“Monchi arrived six months after we arrived here. He was very good, but after two years he needed another chapter in his career,” Emery said ahead of Thursday’s Europa League tie against Bologna.

“I am wishing him the best in his new chapter.

“We decided with him and the club to do a normal transition. It changes nothing, only changing the man.

“We reacted quickly by bringing in one person I know personally. I have a lot of confidence with Roberto and he is coming to help us.”

Villa are 18th in the Premier League with three points and only one goal from their opening five matches.



▲ Aston Villa manager Unai Emery.

Emery hopes to kick-start his side’s season in the Europa League – a competition he won four times between 2014 and 2021 during spells at Sevilla and Villarreal.

“I told the players, for me, Europe is always a dream,” said the Spaniard.

“To share it with the supporters – two years ago in the Conference League, Villa Park was always amazing. Last year in the Champions League, the same.

“I think the supporters will be excited about this competition as well,

like I am. It is another competition to share special moments.”

Emery was unusually scathing of his players’ performance after blowing a lead against 10-man Sunderland in a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

But England defender Ezri Konsa said his manager was right to label Villa’s defending as “lazy”.

“It’s a fair comment. Everyone saw the picture and the goal,” he said. “When your manager doesn’t speak well of you, it puts a bit of fuel into you to prove everyone wrong.”

(Supersport)

Grosjean to drive Haas F1 car for first time since 2020 crash

ROMAIN Grosjean will drive a Haas Formula One car in Italy on Friday for the first time since a 2020 fireball crash ended the French racer’s grand prix career and nearly killed him.

Haas said the 39-year-old, who raced for the US-owned team for five seasons, would test a 2023 Haas VF-23 at the Mugello circuit.

Members of his original crew, including current team principal Ayao Komatsu, who was previously a race engineer, will be in attendance.

“To say I’m excited to get l of a Formula One car would naturally be an understatement,” said Grosjean in a statement.

“I really can’t believe it’s been almost five years, but to come back and have this outing

with my old team is truly something special.

“My kids had designed my helmet for what was meant to be my final grand prix in Abu Dhabi back in 2020 – I’m at last going to be able to give it a go in a Formula One car on Friday.”

Grosjean’s car, loaded full of fuel, speared through the metal barriers after a 192kph impact – ripping in half before erupting in a fireball – on the opening lap of the 29 November race at Bahrain’s desert Sakhir circuit.

The Frenchman, whose left foot was initially trapped and who suffered burns to his hands, miraculously managed to extricate himself after 27 seconds.

He said later he thought he was going to die but willed himself out of the inferno for the sake of his children.

(Supersport)



▲ Romain Grosjean.

Marquez looking to crown comeback with MotoGP title in Japan

MARC Marquez said he wanted to celebrate his “second life” in MotoGP by clinching his first world title since 2019 this weekend in Japan after a nightmare struggle with injuries.

The Spanish Ducati rider can win his seventh world title if he finishes the weekend in Motegi with at least three more points than his brother and nearest championship rival Alex Marquez.

The 32-year-old is back on top after an injury saga that began when he broke his right arm in 2020 and almost convinced him to hang up his helmet.

Marquez has a huge championship lead over his brother and still has five weekends left to clinch the title if he fails to get the job done in Japan.

But he said he is looking to “celebrate something big” this weekend after coming back from what he described as the biggest challenge of his career.

“Right now it’s my second life in MotoGP and this will be important if we can close all that circle in the best way possible,” Marquez said on Thursday.

“Still six races to go but I want to keep the full focus.” “Winning another away Ryder Cup, just considering how hard that has been over the past 12 years, it would be one of the greatest accomplishments of my career for sure,” McIlroy said.

“Since 2012, you look at the results of the Ryder Cup, the home team has won every time, but they also have won convincingly. It has been pretty one-sided either way.

Whatever team, whether that’s Europe or America, that’s the one to break that duck, I



▲ Marc Marquez.

think, is going to go down as one of the best teams in Ryder Cup history.

“We have a wonderful opportunity this week but we also understand it’s going to be very difficult.”

On the eve of his eighth Cup appearance, the most of any golfer this week, McIlroy is

part of a team that returns 11 of 12 players from the triumphant Rome squad.

“It has been a really cohesive group for the last three years,” McIlroy said. “We all know what to expect. We all know what our roles are... that has us prepared to give it a really good go this week.”

Marquez has a whopping 512 championship points, already a single-season record for a MotoGP rider, and has 11 grand prix wins so far this year.

He has happy memories of the circuit in Japan, clinching the championship there in 2014, 2016, and 2018.

Marquez said he would try to “keep the same mentality” but would not panic if he has to keep the championship champagne on ice for longer.

“It’s true that I’m very close to close a cycle where I started five years ago with a very big injury, so let’s see if we can finish in the best way possible,” he said.

“I repeat, if it’s not this weekend, it will not be a disaster. We have another five chances in front.”

Marquez suffered a rare slip-up in San Marino two weeks ago when he crashed while leading the sprint.

He made no mistake in the following day’s grand prix, overtaking pole-sitter Marco Bezzecchi to move into the lead before calmly seeing out the win.

It was Marquez’s 99th race win across MotoGP, Moto2, and Moto3.

It also gave him his first opportunity this season to clinch the title and he said it was “impossible not to think about” achieving it.

“When you are in the interviews or when you are in the paddock, everybody is asking you the same question,” he said.

“How is your feeling? You feel, but in the end the emotions are quite constant, that is the most important.”

(Supersport)

Leopard aims at Y. Africans scalp

... Police outfit has 2-0 advantage over Namibian side

By Chris Dlamini

Date: Friday, September 26, 2025
Venue: Somhlolo National Stadium
Kick-off: 3pm

ESWATINI Police outfit Royal Leopard made things easier for themselves away in Botswana in the first leg by winning 2-0 against the tricky and youthful but inexperienced side, Young Africans.

While Young African will also be out to turn the tables, it is Leopard who must continue where they left off and finish the job - seal their path to the second preliminary stage. If they do that, they will be 180 or so minutes from the cash-spinning group stage.

Any team reaching that stage is guaranteed over E1.5 million (US\$100 000), which has been doubled from what Mbabane Swallows and Nsingizini Hotspurs received in last season's editions of the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League and TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup, respectively. What is it that Leopard need to ensure they advance?



▲ Royal Leopard coach Edwin Matsebula reacting during the match.



▲ Felix Badenhorst controls the ball in front of the opposition players.

Royal Leopard

- The Ingwenyama Cup champions made things easier for themselves in the away first leg with a 2-0 win. It could have been more but brilliant goalkeeping by Young African's Moses Makhae kept the score line respectable.

- This is a very experienced side in the CAF interclub tournaments, and they have shown just that at the Obed Itani Chilume Stadium in Francistown, Botswana, last Saturday. Coach Edwin Matsebula hardly missed midfielder Junior Magagula, who stayed behind due to a shoulder injury. He recalled winger Muzi 'Mzoro' Dlamini, who has hardly featured for them in recent times, to lead the squad as captain, as he wanted his experience.

He joined his senior national team, Sihlangu Semnikati, teammates to outfox a potentially good Young African side that is still trying to get its rhythm after signing 10 new players. Leopard knows they have an easy job, but it can also get complicated as Young African showed glimpses of brilliance and that they can turn on the heat in the sec-



▲ Royal Leopard players celebrate a goal in one of their previous matches.



▲ Muzi 'Mzoro' Dlamini sandwiched by the opposition players.

The Namibia side has confident and sure-footed stars with good footwork in the middle and upfront.

The Players to Watch:

- 1. Felix Badenhorst (Leopard forward)
- 2. Thokozani 'Thikithi' Dlamini (Leopard attacking midfielder)
- 3. Denzel Narib (Y. African striker- Jersey 9)
- 4. Simon Elago (Y. African forward - Jersey 22)



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

How they go through:

- A goalless draw will be enough for Ingwe Mabalabala to go through with a 2-0 aggregate score.

- If Young African score and make it 2-0, it will be 2-2 aggregate, and penalties will decide the winner.

- Leopard must avoid conceding and score a goal if Young African prove to be difficult this time around to advance on a 3-0 aggregate.

- Leopard will not advance if the Young African or Youngile, as they fondly trade, win 3-1 or 3-0. This will equate to a 3-3 or 3-2 aggregate score, with the away goal rule going in favour of the visitors.



▲ Royal Leopard made things easier for themselves away in Botswana in the first leg by winning 2-0 against the tricky and youthful but inexperienced side, Young African.



Kwanele Jele geared for MTN Khemani

Stories By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

REIGNING national champion Kwanele Jele is geared up for the 2025 MTN Khemani road classic. The 4eva Cycling Club rider will be part of the local and international riders during the annual flagship race scheduled for Saturday in Mankayane.

Jele was the best liSwati during the previous edition after finishing in fourth place.

“I want to do better than last year this year by breaking into the podium finish. I am looking forward to the race even though my preparations have been shoddy as I have been struggling with the flu in the past few days,” he said.

Jele further encouraged his local compatriots to continue working hard in the race.

“The plan is to stay on the peloton and attack so that we can leave a mark as locals. I am looking forward to working with the other Eswatini teams to restore national pride,” he said.

The race is funded by MTN Eswatini by E350,000, with four categories lined up for the day: 100km, 60km, 30km, and 5km.

This year’s edition will also 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 Darkton Cycling Club, will take part in the race.



▲ Kwanele Jele in action during a local race.

All set for Autism Eswatini golf tournament

GOLFERS will tee off this weekend for a good course. This will be during the 2025 Autism Eswatini fundraising golf tournament on Saturday, September 27, 2025, at Ubombo Country Club.

Autism Eswatini representative Bongiswa Fakudze said they are looking forward to the competition.

“Autism Eswatini is thrilled to announce its upcoming Fundraising Golf Tournament, taking place on 27 September 2025(Saturday) at Ubombo Country Club, Big Bend. This highly anticipated event aims to raise crucial funds for the establishment

of a One-Stop Centre in the Manzini Region, which will provide holistic rehabilitative services for children with autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions. Additionally, proceeds from the tournament will go towards the sustainability of Autism Eswatini’s operations and the expansion of services across the country,” Fakudze said.

He further said that the competition aims to impact on the lives of the emaSwati. “This tournament is more than just a sporting event; it is a call to action for the nation to come together to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for children and families affected by autism,” he said.



▲ Golfers in action during the previous edition of the Autism golf tournament.



▲ Botswana males national team.



▲ Botswana males national team.

Botswana series to boost African games preps

ESWATINI National Netball Association believes that the Botswana series tournament will boost the country’s preparations for the 2025 Netball Cup.

ENNA head of coaching, Themba Dlamini, revealed the news ahead of the mixed national teams’ trip to Gaborone for the international assignments on Friday (September 26,2025)

The 2025 African netball cup will take place in December in Malawi.

“We believe the assignment will boost our preparations for the African games as we will be able to access our teams. We are grateful to Botswana for the invitation, which will develop the standard of the sport in the region,” he said.

The male national team recently beat Zimbabwe during a two-day international tour played at Mavuso Sports Centre.

The male side finished as runners during the previous edition of the continental cup, which was held in Namibia.

Female teams

Shooters:

Nonkululeko Sihlongonyane (Royal Flames)

Vuyisile Tfusi (Royal Flames)

Bathabile Nkambule (Royal Flames)

Tenele Msibi (Green Lightning)

Nduku Masangane (Green Lightning)

Siphiwo Dlamini (Green Lightning)

Brendan Dhlamini (Royal Flames)

Sizolwethu Magagula (Royal Flames)

Mid-court:

Abigail Simelane (Green Lightning)

Nomcebo Sibandze (Royal Flames)

Cebile Sibandze (Royal Flames)

Phumlile Myeni (Green Lightning)

Nonhle Hlophe (Green Lightning)

Mandisa Sihlongonyane (Green Lightning)

Simanga Vilakati (Green Lightning)

Zwelakhe Mbatha (Royal Flames)

Mpendulo Mncina (Vixens)

Defenders:

Vumile Vilakati (Green Lightning)

Silindzile Dlamini (Royal Flames)

Mukelo Magagula (Royal Flames)

Gcebile Dlamini (Royal Flames)

Fortune Neves (Green Lightning)

Sakhile Maseko (Green Lightning)

Thabo Maphosa (Buffaloes)

Sibusiso Shongwe (Vixens)

Technical teams

Ladies

Sandiziso Maseko (H. Coach)

Catrien Potgieter (Ass. Coach)

Thobile Bhembe (Team Manager)

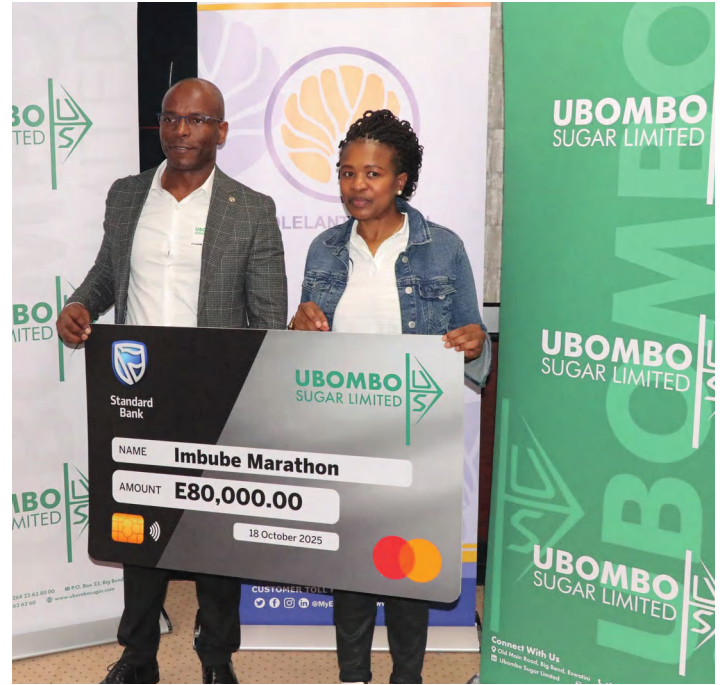
Nonhle Dlamini (Team Doctor)

Males

Vumbukhosi Ndlangamandla (H. Coach)

Wandile Sithole (Ass. Coach)

Nhlanhla Ngcamphalala (Team Manager)



▲ The new sponsors are Ubombo Sugar (E80 000), Spar (E50 000), and Industrial Development Company of Eswatini (IDCE) (E20 000).

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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GETTING bigger and better.

The prize purse for the 2025 Imbube Marathon has increased to E1 million.

This follows the addition of three more sponsors for the seventh edition of the prestigious road race scheduled for October 18, 2025, at Somhlolo National Stadium.

The new sponsors are Ubombo Sugar (E80 000), Spar (E50 000), and Industrial Development Company of Eswatini (IDCE) (E20 000).

The latest donations were made on Thursday at the Eswatini National Provident Fund Offices in Manzini.

Other sponsors of the event include Standard Bank, who are the main sponsors with a contribution of E350 000.

The financial institution made its contribution during the launch of the race held in April at Happy Valley Hotel.

Eswatini National Provident Fund Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Futhie Tembe thanked sponsors for their continued support.

Imbube Marathon purse increased to E1 million

“We are honoured to stand alongside companies like yourselves who have been our steadfast supporters of this vision since the race started: Ubombo Sugar, IDCE, and the Spar,” she said.

Tembe further Ubombo Sugar for continued support.

“We are truly humbled and grateful to receive your generous sponsorships, namely of Illovo (Ubombo Sugar) of E80,000 for the 2025 Imbube Marathon, which is a significant increase from your E60,000 contribution in 2023, and it speaks volumes about your belief in the power of this event and your commitment to the well-being of our community,” she said.

The previous edition was won by Umbuto Eswatini Defense Force runner Mancoba Nhlabatsi.



▲ The financial institution made its contribution during the launch of the race held in April at Happy Valley Hotel.

‘Leopard wary of us’

By Chris Dlamini

IT'S a game to watch.

Sparks can be expected on Friday when Eswatini's Royal Leopard and Namibia's Young Africans go head-to-head.

The two sides will be meeting in the second leg of the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup 2025/26 preliminary round stage. Leopard lead 2-0 from the first leg last Saturday at the Obed Itani Chilume Stadium in Francistown, Botswana.

“We know them now. Yes, they are favourites, but we're from the land of the brave, and we don't give up.

“We're coming with guns blazing, and we've got nothing to lose. It is Leopard who is under pressure. Deep within them, they are wary of us,” said Young African head coach Woody Jacobs during their pre-match briefing at Somhlolo National Stadium on Thursday.

Jacobs said they had a balanced game in the first leg, but experience was the only difference. He added that they were ready to play their football for enjoyment and turn the tables against Leopard.

His captain Maphoti ‘Mirror’ Mathopha reiterated the coach's words.



▲ Young Africans coach Woody Jacobs during the pre match meeting held on Thursday.

“What I can add is that we're going to the second preliminary stage. Tomorrow, we will win the game,” he said.

The captain said their confidence was high after gaining their first match experience in the CAF competition. Meanwhile, Leopard Captain Muzi ‘Mzoro’ Dlamini said theirs was to finish the job, but they expected a good fight from Young African.

Leopard coach Edwin Matsebula said a cautious approach was wise for them since they were up against a hungry and youthful team that was comfortable on the ball and quick in their movements.

We need your support – ‘Tiger’ to emaSwati fans

By Chris Dlamini

THIS Sunday is a special one for Nsingizini Hotspurs - their TotalEnergies CAF Champions League journey must be decided.

The Shiselweni outfit must overturn a 1-0 deficit against Zimbabwe's champions and current league leaders, Simba Bhora at Somhlolo National Stadium, Lobamba.

“We may have lost to Simba Bhora, but we put up a good fight. I'm proud of my teammates for the performance despite losing 1-0. “At home, we will definitely play even better and win the match to advance. One cannot lie, we will need the local football fans to come out in numbers to cheer us on. We need the nation's support,”



▲ Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini.

said the green and white Insingizi Yezulu captain and midfielder Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini in the first leg post-match press conference.

He appealed to all Eswatini football fans to fill the stadium.

“We'll try not to let them down. We believe we can still win this match,” he said.

His coach, Mandla Qhogi declared it was still an open match.

“Simba Bhora will not have it any easy. We can win at home, and they must be ready for war. It's not over yet,” he said.

Qhogi said their away performance gave hope that they will do better at home, in front of the home crowd. Meanwhile, it has since been announced that the entry fee to the match will be E80. Kick-off is 3pm.

**Bucs coach to
ring changes
for Lioli clash**

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**Leopard aims
at Y. Africans
scalp**

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Sport



Imbube Marathon purse increased to **E1m**

... This follows the addition of three more sponsors for the seventh edition of the prestigious road race scheduled for October 18, 2025 at Somhlolo National Stadium.

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