



HER MAJESTY ARRIVES IN THE UAE



▲ Her Majesty the Indlovukazi has arrived safely in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where she is on an official visit. Receiving the Indlovukazi upon arrival were Senior Government Officials and representatives of the UAE Royal Family. Also present was Eswatini’s Ambassador to the UAE H.E Sifiso Dlamini and officers from the Embassy, among others.

Health Ministry  
launches major  
recruitment drive  
... pinpoints 408 critical vacancies

By Delisa Magagula

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SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2



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E2.2mln worth of dagga  
on the borderline

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By Delisa Magagula

# Health Ministry launches major recruitment drive

## ... pinpoints 408 critical vacancies

THE Ministry of Health has unveiled an aggressive human resource deployment strategy aimed at alleviating the crippling staff shortages and persistent burnout issues plaguing the country's public health system.

This recruitment drive, which is a core component of the government's broader health sector reform agenda, targets filling 408 critical vacancies in a concerted effort to enhance service delivery and build a resilient workforce.

The decision comes as part of the Ministry's proactive response to years of high staff attrition, primarily driven by compulsory retirements and resignations, which have left public hospitals and clinics severely understaffed.

Minister of Health Mduduzi Matsebula emphasised the necessity of this move, positioning the restoration of the health sector as an imperative for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and securing the nation's human capital for future prosperity.

The latest initiative, detailed in the Ministry's 2025/26 Second Quarter (July to September) Performance Report, details the specific cadres being prioritised for recruitment and deployment.

The Ministry, working in close collaboration with the Civil Service Commission and the Ministry of Public Service, is focusing on bolstering essential patient-facing departments.

**1. Nursing Staff:** A total of 104 nursing roles are slated for immediate filling, acknowledging the tremendous strain on current front-line caregivers who have often had to work excessive overtime to compensate for the significant deficits.

**2. Pharmaceutical Services:** A major expansion is planned for pharmacy and medical supply management to stabilise the drug supply chain. This includes the urgent recruitment of 115 Pharmacists and 37 Pharmacy Technicians, to complete the recruitment and deployment process for these cadres by October 2025.

**3. Support Services:** The Ministry recognises that a functioning health system relies on more than just clinical staff, and has allocated funding for 123 support staff positions to ensure facilities and logistics run smoothly.

This immediate drive to fill 408 positions is a critical step in addressing the overall human resource deficit, which has, at times, involved hundreds of declared vacancies. While acknowledging the magnitude of the shortage, this targeted recruitment aims to provide immediate, tangible relief to overstretched departments.

"The current recruitment and deployment strategy is not an isolated measure; rather, it is anchored in the newly launched Human Resources for Health (HRH) Strategy 2025-2030. This long-term, comprehensive policy is designed to address the root causes of the health workforce crisis," said Matsebula.

The HRH Strategy focuses on three principal pillars which are workforce deployment, this pillar involves strategically placing new and existing staff where the need is greatest, ensuring that rural and underserved areas benefit from the new influx of personnel.

The plan includes a commitment to aligning staff deployment with broader public sector reforms to maximise efficiency.

Retention and motivation, beyond recruitment, the strategy includes an emphasis on improving the working environment, addressing staff welfare issues, and exploring incentives to reduce the high rate of attrition. This is a direct response to the "relentless work done" by health staff and aims to foster a more resilient and motivated workforce.

"Continuous professional development and aligning local training institutions with national health needs are key to ensuring a sustainable supply of qualified health professionals for the future," said the Minister.



▲ Minister of Health Mduduzi Matsebula.

Furthermore, the Ministry is actively working to secure the continued employment of 260 health officers previously supported by a major international partner, USAID, by transitioning their contracts to a new partner, RISE.

This forward-thinking measure ensures that the current pool of experienced staff is retained, preventing a major and immediate setback in public health service provision.

Principal Secretary Khanya Mabuza, last month, confirmed that the Ministry is seeking to recruit over 400 health workers to ease the burden on the system.

"We are finalising a strategy to fill these positions within a three-month period," said Mabuza a month ago, adding that excessive

overtime was leading to burnout among existing personnel.

Despite this recruitment drive, Eswatini still falls far short of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommendation. According to the 2024 WHO Health Labour Market Analysis, the country requires an additional 14 125 health workers to reach Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Meanwhile complementing the human resource efforts, the Ministry is simultaneously fast-tracking reforms in its supply chain, particularly through the Central Medical Stores (CMS).

This is critical, as health worker morale and public trust are heavily affected by chronic medicine stock-outs. In a move to enhance accountability and public finance management, the Ministry has clarified its stance on supplier performance and product quality.

The Minister confirmed that contractual terms strictly mandate suppliers to either replace or reimburse the cost of any recalled or substandard pharmaceuticals and medical supplies.

Should a supplier fail to honour this within 60 days, the Ministry can legally withhold equivalent funds from other outstanding payments to that supplier. This mechanism is designed to safeguard public funds and ensure the quality of commodities, which is crucial for the work of the newly deployed health professionals.

In summary, Eswatini's Ministry of Health is committing significant resources and strategic focus to a major human capital investment.

The recruitment of 408 health professionals and support staff, backed by the long-term HRH Strategy, marks a decisive and necessary pivot toward stabilising the country's public health system and delivering on the promise of Universal Health Coverage for all citizens.

# Army confiscates over E2.2mln worth of dagga on the borderline

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

THE Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) has recorded significant progress in its efforts to curb cross-border drug trafficking, particularly the smuggling of dagga, according to the Ministry of Defence and National Security's Second Quarterly Performance Report.

During the period under review, the Defence Force successfully intercepted and confiscated 2,266.774 kilograms of dagga, with an estimated street value of E2,266,774.00.

The consignment was seized in various operations conducted across the country and along Eswatini's borders, particularly with the Republic of South Africa.

According to the report, the confiscated drugs were handed over to different police stations within the UEDF's Areas of Responsibility (AOR), along with some of the suspects involved in the illegal trade. In certain instances, traffickers abandoned their consignments and fled the scene to evade arrest.

"The operations extended from foot



▲ Army Commander Moses Mashikilisane Fakudzwe speaks.

patrols to vehicle checkpoint (VCP) patrols," the report stated. "Foreign nationals, especially from the Republic of South Africa, were intercepted while attempting to transport dagga across the border."

The Ministry commended the UEDF for its consistent vigilance and operational discipline, emphasising that such efforts contribute significantly to the country's internal security and regional crime prevention.

The report also highlighted the increasing sophistication of smuggling attempts, noting that traffickers are adopting new routes and methods to evade law enforcement.

However, the Defence Force remains resolute in its mission to disrupt the illegal trade. "Patrols will be intensified in order to

bring to book or eliminate this illicit activity within our areas of operations," the Ministry affirmed.

Presenting the report recently, the Minister of Defence and National Security, Senator Pholile Shakantu, highlighted the Ministry's achievements in ensuring the safety of Their Majesties and visiting dignitaries, as well as ongoing operations to combat cross-border crime.

She had noted the successful seizure of illegal goods such as livestock, vehicles, trading items, and drugs. The Minister also reported that Military Health Clinics continue to provide essential medical services to both army personnel and members of the public.

The debate was chaired by Gcina Magagula,

Chairperson of the Ministry of Defence and National Security Portfolio Committee.

Dagga smuggling remains one of the major cross-border crimes affecting Eswatini, with traffickers exploiting porous sections of the border to transport the substance into neighbouring South Africa, where it fetches a higher market price. Security analysts have noted that the UEDF's recent successes reflect improved coordination with other law enforcement agencies, including the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), as well as enhanced surveillance capabilities along key smuggling corridors.

The Ministry concluded by reiterating its commitment to protecting Eswatini's territorial integrity and ensuring that the country's borders remain secure against all forms of transnational crime.

"The Defence Force will continue to strengthen its intelligence-led operations and border patrols to maintain national security and prevent Eswatini from being used as a transit point for illicit activities," the Minister emphasised.

With intensified patrols and inter-agency collaboration, authorities believe the recent crackdown marks another decisive step in dismantling the networks behind dagga smuggling and preserving peace and order within the Kingdom.



Dvuladvula payment...

Govt appeals for patience

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini has appealed for patience and understanding from civil servants as technical processes to implement the long-awaited Salary Review continue. Minister of Public Service Mabulala Maseko described the current situation as an “unfortunate scenario” but assured public servants that salaries would be paid in full, together with the new salary adjustments, by October 27 or possibly earlier.

“This is an unfortunate scenario, and we appeal to the banks not to be harsh on public servants,” said Maseko. “Civil servants should be patient with government. The salaries might even come earlier than the 27th, but we had to go with that date as a sure timeline.”

Technical adjustments to ensure accuracy Government explained that the temporary delay is the result of technical adjustments necessary to integrate the new salary structures under the recently concluded Salary Review. The review, which is aimed at improving the remuneration of over 44,000 public servants, represents a significant milestone in government’s ongoing efforts to enhance the welfare of its workforce.

Officials from the Ministry of Public Service emphasized that accuracy in processing the revised salary scales was crucial to avoid errors and ensure that every civil servant receives their correct due, including back-pay and arrears.

Protecting workers’ interests

... Minister of Public Service Mabulala Maseko appeals to banks not to be harsh on public servants on debit order issues.

While some union leaders have voiced concern over the timing of the payments, government maintains that the adjustments are a positive step that will ultimately benefit employees in the long run. The Ministry assured workers that no one will lose out financially, as all entitlements will be included in the October payments.

Government further appealed to financial institutions to show flexibility and understanding during this short transition period.

“We are confident that our banking partners will cooperate, knowing that this adjustment process is temporary and meant to improve the livelihoods of public servants,” said a senior government official.

Commitment to dialogue and transparency

The Ministry of Public Service reiterated its commitment to maintaining open communication with unions and workers as the process unfolds. It assured stakeholders that all efforts are being made to complete the salary disbursement process as swiftly as possible.

The Salary Review a result of extensive consultations between government and public sector unions marks one of the most significant public service reforms in recent years. It is expected to bring relief to civil servants, many of whom have waited for years for pay adjustments that reflect the cost of living.

As government finalizes the technical alignment of the new pay structures, officials have encouraged public servants to re-



▲ Minister of Public Service Mabulala Maseko described the current situation as an “unfortunate scenario” but assured public servants that salaries would be paid in full, together with the new salary adjustments, by October 27 or possibly earlier.

main calm and cooperative.

“This short delay is part of a greater transformation that will uplift the public service,” Maseko said. “We ask our workers to stand with government as we complete this important process.”

Despite the temporary delay, the Ministry emphasized that October’s salaries

will come with tangible benefits for public workers not only higher pay but also a more equitable salary structure across different sectors.

The government’s message is clear: the current delay is a momentary adjustment on the road to long-term financial improvement for the nation’s dedicated public servants.

Joy, gratitude fill Phondo as Prince Lindani, MP Dube give back

THE usually quiet community of Phondo was on Saturday transformed into a scene of celebration, gratitude, and unity as residents gathered at Bhadzeni Umphakatsi to witness an act of generosity that touched many hearts.

The event, graced by Prince Lindani and Member of Parliament Bonginkosi Dube, saw scores of residents particularly the elderly receive cash gifts and words of encouragement from the two leaders.

The atmosphere was filled with song, dance, and appreciation as the community expressed heartfelt thanks for being remembered and supported.

According to sources at the event, the gesture came as a relief and blessing to many families, especially the elderly who continue to face economic challenges. “This gift may look small, but it means a lot to us. It shows that our leaders care about the people at the grassroots,” said one elderly resident, her eyes welling up with tears of joy.

Prince Lindani, speaking during the ceremony, said the initiative was about giving back to the community and uplifting the spirit of unity and compassion. He empha-

sized that leadership must always be anchored in serving the people, especially those most in need.

“We are one family under the same flag. Our duty as leaders is to share love, hope, and support. Today is about appreciating our elders and showing that they are not forgotten,” the Prince said to loud applause.

MP Bonginkosi Dube echoed similar sentiments, noting that the gesture was part of his ongoing efforts to bring development and dignity to the people of Phondo. He thanked the Prince for his partnership and encouraged residents to remain united and committed to community growth.

“Our strength lies in togetherness. When we stand with our leaders and work hand in hand, Phondo can move forward,” Dube told the gathering.

The joyful event also featured traditional performances, prayers, and words of blessing from community elders. For many in attendance, it was more than just a gift-giving ceremony it was a moment of hope and reconnection between the community and its leaders. As the sun set over Bhadzeni Umphakatsi, the spirit of gratitude lingered in the air. Residents went



▲ The usually quiet community of Phondo was on Saturday transformed into a scene of celebration, gratitude, and unity as residents gathered at Bhadzeni Umphakatsi to witness an act of generosity that touched many hearts.

home smiling, clutching their envelopes and feeling deeply appreciated.

In a time when economic hard-

ships continue to affect rural communities, the act of giving back by Prince Lindani and MP Dube has left an indelible mark on the peo-

ple of Phondo a reminder that compassion and leadership still walk hand in hand in the Kingdom of Eswatini.



Stories by Delisa Magagula

# MPs punch holes in Millennium Project Unit Operations

THE Millennium Projects Unit (MPU), under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, has come under parliamentary scrutiny amid growing concerns over its regulatory status, capacity, and oversight of multi-billion-emalangeni national projects.

During the recent House of Assembly debate on the Ministry's Second Quarter Performance Report for the 2025/2026 financial year, Members of Parliament questioned the legitimacy and efficiency of the Unit, which they say operates without a clear legal framework despite managing massive infrastructure projects such as the International Convention Centre (ICC) and the Five-Star Hotel (FISH).

The Millennium Projects Unit was established in 2001 under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development to fast-track strategic national infrastructure projects aligned with the National Development Strategy (NDS).

Its role includes project planning, implementation oversight, contract facilitation, and coordination between government and private sector partners.

However, despite handling multi-billion-emalangeni developments, the Unit remains alarmingly small currently staffed by just four officials, including two engineers, one economist, and a director.

The MPU's Director, Patrick Mnisi, confirmed the limited staff complement during a recent Public Accounts Committee (PAC) sitting.

MPs raised questions about the legal basis for the MPU's establishment, demanding to know which law or legislative instrument gives it the authority to manage such large-scale national projects.

In response, the Ministry clarified that



▲ The International Convention Centre (ICC) and the Five-Star Hotel (FISH).

the MPU was not created through an Act of Parliament, but rather through an executive directive and administrative arrangements within the Ministry.

The Unit operates as a technical and coordination body that reports to the Millennium Project Technical Committee, which in turn reports to Cabinet.

The Ministry admitted that the absence of a clear legal framework has created ambiguity around accountability and governance.

To address this, it is exploring options to formalise the Unit's mandate through appropriate legislative instruments, which may include drafting regulations that clearly define the Unit's scope, governance, and oversight mechanisms.

The Ministry further committed to tabling

the relevant documentation and updates before Parliament once the legal review process is complete.

Parliament's Portfolio Committee expressed concern over significant cost overruns in projects overseen by the MPU.

One cited example was the bulk earthworks cost for the ICC/FISH project, which ballooned from an initial E80 million to an estimated E567 million an increase of nearly 600 per cent with limited documentation or justification for the variation orders.

Lawmakers questioned how a unit with just four officials could effectively manage such large and complex projects, raising fears of overreliance on external consultants and potential misuse of funds.

"The Portfolio Committee recommends

that the Ministry submit a report about the establishment of the Millennium Project Unit and the progress of the Unit being entrusted with heavy project funds within 14 days after the adoption of this report by Parliament," reads part of the Committee's recommendation.

The Committee went further to caution against assigning the upcoming construction of the new Parliament building to the MPU.

The report warns that lest they witness a recurrence of what is happening now about the long-overdue completion of the International Convention Centre.

MPs also queried the current status of the new Parliament building project, initially projected to begin by 2027.

In its response, the Ministry described the matter as sensitive, revealing that diplomatic considerations involving a visiting Vice President had influenced its decision to withhold public updates to avoid negative publicity.

"Unfortunately, the engagement did not yield any positive outcomes," the Ministry stated, adding that a comprehensive update would be provided in the next reporting cycle.

While the Portfolio Committee stopped short of calling for the suspension of the MPU's operations, its report signals serious parliamentary concern over the Unit's lack of regulation, capacity, and oversight.

The Ministry now faces a 14-day deadline to present Parliament with detailed information on the MPU's establishment, legal standing, staffing, and project management framework.



## MPs give Finance 7-days to release funds to Micro-Project

THE Portfolio Committee has pressed for urgent action on the release of funds allocated through the Contingency Fund to procure a 'yellow plant' under the Micro-projects Programme.

The micro-projects initiative falls under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. According to the Committee's report, the budget for micro-projects was approved and the Contingency Fund was directed for the procurement of the yellow plant, yet no disbursement has been made.

"The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development must liaise with the Ministry of Finance to release the funds as Parliament pronounced itself that the Contingency Fund should be directed to the Ministry of Economic Planning and De-

velopment for the procurement of the yellow plant, within 7 days after the adoption of this report by Parliament," reads the recommendation from the Ministry's report.

The 'yellow plant' refers to heavy-duty construction or earth-moving equipment to support micro-project infrastructure (such as roads, community halls, footbridges) across chiefdoms.

While detailed public records of the exact item and its cost are limited, previous Ministry documents link the Micro-projects Programme to community infrastructure delivery and asset procurement.

The delay in funds release is seen as a bottleneck for ongoing micro-project implementation. The Ministry of Finance was previously instructed to pay Micro-Projects E100 million in the next seven days

in 2024 under similar circumstances.

During the House debate last week, MPs expressed frustration that community-level infrastructure remains stalled due to inaction.

They noted that despite budget approval and Parliament's directive, the equipment critical for groundworks remains unprocured and non-operational.

The Committee further recommends approval of the Ministry's 2nd Quarter Budget Performance for FY 2025/26 conditional on the prompt release of the Contingency Fund and the procurement being visibly underway.

If the Ministry fails to act within the seven-day window, Parliamentarians have implied further oversight steps will follow, potentially including site visits, project freezes or re-allocation of funds.

## Legislators laud Micro-Projects Programme

SEVERAL Members of Parliament have publicly commended the Micro-Projects Programme (MPP) for its role in delivering small-scale infrastructure and community assets across the country, noting the unit's speed of delivery, apparent transparency and visible impact at the constituency level.

This was revealed during last week's House of Assembly debate on the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development Second Quarter Performance Report for Financial Year 2025/2026.

Meanwhile, Parliamentarians and senior government figures who visited project sites in recent months described the programme as effective in delivering classrooms, community halls and other small capital works that directly benefit rural communities.

A recent handover of a three-classroom block at Luhlanguhlangotsini High School was recorded as completed by the Micro-Projects Programme in October 2024.

The MPP operates under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and imple-

ments community development projects financed from a range of government instruments, including the Regional Development Fund (RDF) and the Community Development Special Fund (CDSF).

The Ministry's 2024 annual performance documents list the Microprojects Unit as a direct implementer of small capital projects aimed at poverty alleviation and local service delivery.

During oversight visits and constituency tours, several MPs publicly commended the programme's delivery model. Social media posts from official government accounts record statements of appreciation by Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister following site inspections, acknowledging the Micro-Projects Unit's work in improving community facilities.

The Micro-Projects Programme traces its origins to an initiative designed to speed up small infrastructure works by decentralising planning and execution, a model that was recognised early on by government and development partners to implement many small projects quickly and with reduced administrative delay.



By Delisa Magagula

THE future of sustainable agriculture and nutrition in Eswatini was on full display as learners, teachers, and parents converged at the Eswatini College of Technology for the Traditional African Vegetables Initiative (TAVI) Schools Competition Ceremony.

The event served as a vibrant celebration of the achievements of schools in promoting the cultivation and consumption of traditional African vegetables, highlighting their vital role in health and climate resilience.

The competition is a cornerstone of the Taiwan-Africa Vegetable Initiative (TAVI), a transformative collaboration organised in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education and Training.

Its primary goal is to inspire and motivate learners to understand the health and socio-economic benefits of incorporating traditional African vegetables into their diets and livelihoods.

A highlight of the ceremony was the recognition of exceptional dedication and skill in school gardening. Musa Maseko from Enhlanhleni Primary School was presented with the Outstanding Garden Award.

Musa Maseko's efforts have had an impact far beyond the school gates. He was lauded for not only promoting vegetable farming within Enhlanhleni Primary but also for reaching into the wider community, inspiring others to embrace sustainable agriculture.

His dedication, skill, and leadership were recognised with a prize of E1500, a trophy, and a certificate. The competition brought together participants from 16 pilot schools who took part in TAVI Phase I.

The judging criteria focused on various activities, including school gardening, nutrition education, and traditional African vegetable meal preparation, demonstrating how schools are powerful platforms for promoting healthy eating, agrobiodiversity, and nurturing future generations of community leaders, farmers, and chefs.

Meanwhile, World Vegetable Centre Dr Sophia Chan, the TAVI Project Manager for the Taiwan-Africa Vegetable Initiative, spoke on the significance of the occasion and the project's progress.

Dr Chan opened her address by expressing gratitude to the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) for their unwavering support for the TAVI.

Since its inception in 2021, the initiative has created an international collaboration that has measurably improved nutrition, enhanced livelihoods, and safeguarded vege-

# TAVI Schools competition celebrates Traditional African Vegetables



▲ Some of the Agriculture teachers who attended even.

table biodiversity across Africa, including in Eswatini.

"The TAVI Project has underscored the importance of vegetables such as amaranth, jute mallow, African nightshade, spider plant, and okra in building climate-resilient food systems and supporting local farmers. In Eswatini, the project has already reached over nine thousand children through enriched school meals and nutrition education in 16 pilot schools," said Dr Chan.

She further mentioned that, this number is set to expand significantly, with an expectation to reach more than 20,000 learners across 42 schools starting this year.

The project has also reached farmers across all regions through extension work, with outreach further amplified through mobile kitchens and food ambassadors.

"Today's competition is a celebration of these collective efforts," Dr Chan stated, acknowledging the learners, teachers, cooks, and parents who contributed to the success of Phase I.

The ceremony also served as a key mile-

stone, marking the transition from TAVI Phase I (2021-2024) to TAVI Phase II (2025-2027). Building on the foundation of trust and success established in the initial phase, the next phase will consolidate the gains made in Eswatini and expand activities to Kenya and Tanzania, thereby amplifying the impact of the initiative across the continent.

Dr Chan expressed inspiration at the commitment shown by all stakeholders teachers, headteachers, school cooks, parents, and learners whose dedication forms the very foundation on which the TAVI Project thrives.

She also thanked the project's steadfast partners: the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education and Training, and the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

"We are not only cultivating vegetables; we are cultivating health, resilience, and opportunity for generations to come," Dr Chan concluded. The event looked forward to continuing the journey in the years ahead, promising a further expansion of health and opportunity across the region.



▲ Dr Sophia Chan opened the ceremony.

## Long-distance dedication paves the way for the Enhlanhleni Methodist

THE spirit of commitment and resilience was embodied by the overall competition winner, Enhlanhleni Methodist Primary School, whose journey to the awards ceremony underscored the deep dedication of its educators and learners.

The Methodist School was named the overall champion of the TAVI Schools Competition, a culmination of sustained excellence in school gardening, nutrition education, and community engagement.

Thulani Thwala, a teacher from the school, expressing happiness over the win, noted the significant challenges overcome by the team.

"We are happy about the win, we beat all odds to make it here, our teachers, pupils

and parents helped us with this achievement and we are grateful," said Thwala.

He further highlighted that the team had beaten all odds to participate in the competition and had travelled a long way to receive their prizes.

The victory, therefore, was not only a recognition of their work in promoting traditional African vegetables but also a testament to their perseverance and commitment to the TAVI project's objectives, despite logistical hurdles and the distance travelled.

"Our success illustrates the powerful role that dedication plays in the Traditional African Vegetables Initiative, proving that a long journey is a small price to pay for cultivating health and opportunity," he said.



▲ Enhlanhleni Methodist with Thulani Thwala.



# Over E500 000 worth of rustled livestock recovered

... Army also intercepted undeclared goods

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

THE Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) has intensified its border security operations, successfully intercepting several cases of livestock theft and undeclared goods smuggling along Eswatini's borders during the period under review.

According to the Ministry of Defence and National Security's Second Quarterly Performance Report, UEDF operations resulted in the control of multiple cross-border crimes, including rustling and the illegal movement of goods into the country.

The report revealed that 70 goats, valued at E93,900, were recovered after being rustled from Eswatini into neighbouring countries. Similarly, 31 cattle worth E344,000 were intercepted before they could be smuggled across the border. The livestock was handed over to the relevant authorities for processing and eventual return to their rightful owners.

The Ministry noted that rustling remains a serious concern in border communities, often involving syndicates that take advantage of the country's porous borders. The UEDF's timely interventions, however, have been instrumental in curbing this criminal activity and safeguarding farmers' livelihoods.

In addition to combating rustling, the Defence Force also recorded significant progress in stopping the smuggling of un-



▲ The Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) has intensified its border security operations.

declared trading items. The report stated that undeclared goods worth E84,555.25 including new and second-hand clothing, cigarettes, alcohol, electronic devices, and skin lotion were seized during the quarter.

These items, which were being transported into Eswatini from neighbouring countries without proper customs declarations, were confiscated and handed over to the Eswatini Revenue Authority (SRA) for the necessary customs and tax procedures.

"The Ministry commends the Defence Force for its vigilance in monitoring and intercepting illegal trade activities along the borderlines," the report read. "Such operations not only protect the country's econ-

omy but also reinforce Eswatini's commitment to lawful cross-border trade."

The UEDF continues to conduct routine foot and vehicle patrols across key border points to deter rustlers and smugglers. These intensified operations, supported by improved surveillance and intelligence sharing with law enforcement agencies, have contributed to a decline in incidents of cross-border crime.

Security experts have noted that the Defence Force's success reflects stronger collaboration between the UEDF, the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), and the Eswatini Revenue Authority, as well as increased community participation in report-

ing suspicious activities. The Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring national security, emphasizing that border protection remains a key priority in the fight against organized cross-border crime.

"The UEDF will continue to strengthen patrols and surveillance along all borderlines to protect national resources, prevent smuggling, and ensure the safety of citizens," the report stated.

With the recovery of stolen livestock and the interception of undeclared goods worth over E522,000, the UEDF's latest operations underscore its critical role in maintaining law and order and safeguarding Eswatini's territorial integrity.

THE Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) has reported a significant number of informal border crossings during the latest quarter, with women accounting for the majority of unauthorized movements into and out of the Kingdom.

According to the Ministry of Defence and National Security's Second Quarterly Performance Report, a total of 98,171 females crossed Eswatini's borders informally, compared to 59,434 males. Informal crossings refer to individuals moving across national borders without following official immigration procedures, often driven by economic hardship, conflict, or the search for better living conditions.

The Ministry noted that informal crossings largely occur at designated border points manned by UEDF personnel, highlighting the Defence Force's ongoing efforts to monitor and control these activities.

Despite these efforts, the UEDF faces several operational challenges that limit its capacity to fully secure the borders. These challenges include:

Limited personnel and a shortage of advanced technological equipment, such as drones, to monitor remote areas.

Insufficient tools to effectively search personnel and vehicles at checkpoints.

Porous borders, which make it easier for individuals to bypass official crossings.

Communication difficulties at frontline positions due to lack of radios.

The Ministry emphasized that these con-

## Women dominate informal border crossings



straints hamper the Defence Force's ability to prevent informal crossings completely, while acknowledging that most movements are successfully monitored and recorded.

Security experts warn that informal crossings, if not effectively managed, can facilitate smuggling, human trafficking, and other illicit activities. They recommend enhanced investment in border infrastructure, surveillance technology, and communication equipment to strengthen Eswatini's border

security. "While the UEDF continues to conduct rigorous patrols and checkpoint operations, addressing equipment and manpower shortages is critical to safeguarding the Kingdom's borders," the report stated.

With women making up the majority of informal crossings, authorities are considering targeted awareness campaigns to inform communities about legal border procedures and the risks associated with unauthorized movement.

The report shows that during the period under review:

**Entries:**  
Females: 59,359  
Males: 30,234  
Total: 89,593  
**Exits:**  
Females: 38,812  
Males: 29,200  
Total: 68,012



## BUSINESS NEWS

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### 90% of procurement stays in Eswatini

IN a show of commitment to national economic growth, the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has revealed that nearly 90 per cent of its procurement spending goes to locally registered companies. Speaking during the Bank's Annual Supplier Day held on Friday at the CBE Complex, Deputy Director Supply Chain, Warren Dlamini, said the Bank's procurement strategy continues to empower Eswatini-based businesses.

#### US stocks to be tested by Tesla, Netflix earnings

NEW YORK — Earnings reports next week, including from Tesla and Netflix will provide a deeper look at U.S. corporate profits while delayed U.S. inflation data will mark another test of the stock market, which has become shakier even as it remains around record highs. The fourth year of the S&P 500's bull run kicked off this week with some significant gyrations after a long period of market calm.

#### Banking shares' wobbles reveal growing unease over credit risks

NEW YORK/LONDON/SINGAPORE — A clutch of bad loans at banks in recent weeks has shaken investor confidence in banking shares, which gyrated sharply late this week as unease mounted over credit risks that threatened to spill into the broader markets. The markets have weathered a string of credit scares and surprise write-downs over the past two years, but sentiment took a particularly hard knock in recent days.



#### FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	16.8452	17.3119
G.B. Pound	22.6328	23.3083
EURO	19.7921	20.3994
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E21.60/Litre	
Diesel	E22.90/Litre	
Paraffin	E17.25/Litre	

# Eswatini pushes for a fairer global finance system

By Delisa Magagula

MINISTER of Finance Neal Rijkenberg is spearheading Eswatini's push for a fairer Global Finance system.

Joining world leaders last week in Washington D.C. for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Annual Meetings.

He also represented the African Union (AU) at the upcoming G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors gathering under South Africa's presidency.

In his address, Rijkenberg emphasised Africa's demand for fairness in the global financial architecture.

"Our message to the G20, IMF and World Bank is to fix the Common Framework, embrace innovative tools and amplify Africa's voice and representation. We must strengthen Africa's economic sovereignty and ensure that the international financial architecture is responsive to our needs," said Rijkenberg.

Meanwhile, Eswatini's delegation underscored that the Kingdom has fully repaid its IMF obligations, aiming to position itself as a credible partner in the global financial system.

The country's improving Article IV assessments by the IMF have also been cited as evidence of stronger macro-fiscal standing.

The discussions covered key economic and financial reforms. For Africa, priorities include



▲ Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg with the CBE Governor Dr Phil Mnisi.

enhanced representation in multilateral institutions, reform of sovereign debt treatment mechanisms, and improved cost and accessibility of capital for emerging economies.

"From sovereign credit rating to domestic resource mobilisation and curbing illicit financial flows our call is that Africa is taking decisive continental action," said the Minister.

Worth noting is that the IMF-World Bank stages served as both a platform for Eswatini to engage with bilateral and multilateral partners and a strategic opportunity for the Kingdom to

showcase its reform credentials.

Rijkenberg framed the engagement as part of a busy Washington schedule of meetings.

We spent a lot of time just meeting with these different entities, we also as Eswatini have our voice there making sure we also can lobby for certain things and push for certain things," said the Minister.

In the wake of these forums, Eswatini is seeking to deepen its ties with development partners and investors by leveraging its role as both an AU voice and a national reformer.

## Saudi Fund shows interest in Mkhondvo—Ngwavuma water initiative

By Delisa Magagula

ON the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings, Eswatini's finance delegation held productive talks with the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) regarding potential funding for the Mkhondvo—Ngwavuma Water Augmentation Project (MNWAP).

The delegation included Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg, Principal Secretary Vusie Dlamini, and Director Armstrong Dlamini of the Debt Management Unit.

MNWAP is an infrastructure and irrigation programme designed to address water scarcity, climate resilience and rural economic development in Eswatini's Shiselweni region.

Phase 1 includes the construction of the Mpakeni Dam on the Ngwavuma River and the downstream conveyance system. Component 1B aims to irrigate approximately 5,000 hectares across Sigwe, Maloma, Mconcwane/Mcathuvane and St Philips.

The full project, by its second phase, envisions up to 30,000 hectares of irrigated land and is expected to benefit around 100,000 people. The programme aims to empower rural smallholder farmers, create employment opportunities (especially for women and youth), bolster food security and stimulate agro-industrial development.



▲ Minister Neal with the Saudi Fund representative.

The meeting in Washington explored potential collaboration and financing terms for MNWAP. While specific commitment figures were not disclosed, the interest from the Saudi Fund highlights Eswatini's strategy to diversify its development financing sources beyond traditional donors. The African Development Bank (AfDB) is already engaged with Phase 1B of the programme. For Eswatini, securing additional funding is timely.

According to Rijkenberg public expenditure pressures and a salary review on the horizon, the Government sees infrastructure investment as both a developmental imperative and a means to mobilise growth.

Minister Rijkenberg noted, they are in a space where with expenditure pressure they are looking at a probably tough year next year in budget perspective.

He further mentioned that should the discussions result in formal funding arrangements, MNWAP could move into accelerated implementation potentially unlocking agro-industrial value chains and shifting water-security bottlenecks in the country's most vulnerable region.

"For the Saudi Fund, the deal would extend its development portfolio into Southern Africa. For Eswatini, the interest signals growing investor confidence and a step toward realising a major national infrastructure priority," said the Minister.

Meanwhile, the next phase will involve structuring financing terms, performing due diligence, and integrating the new funding into the broader project framework being managed by the Eswatini Water and Agriculture Development Enterprise (ESWADE).



By Delisa Magagula

IN a show of commitment to national economic growth, the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has revealed that nearly 90 per cent of its procurement spending goes to locally registered companies.

Speaking during the Bank's Annual Supplier Day held on Friday at the CBE Complex, Deputy Director Supply Chain, Warren Dlamini, said the Bank's procurement strategy continues to empower Eswatini-based businesses.

"Ninety per cent of what you see around the CBE Complex was procured through Eswatini-registered companies," Dlamini said.

Dlamini said the Bank's approach aims to circulate money within the domestic economy while fostering job creation and skills development.

CBE Chief Financial Officer, Isabel Made, said the Bank remains committed to maintaining fair, transparent, and efficient procurement processes.

"We want to be both an employer of choice and a client of choice," she said.

The Annual Supplier Day highlighted the Bank's ongoing efforts to strengthen partnerships with local suppliers, supporting business growth while reinforcing Eswatini's broader push for economic self-reliance.

Suppliers urge regulation of foreign tenders

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) officially unveiled its flagship e-Procurement system on Friday, introducing a paperless and transparent platform to streamline supplier engagement.

Developed in-house, the system will go live on Monday October 20, 2025, and will be accessible via [www.centralbank.org.sz/tenders](http://www.centralbank.org.sz/tenders).

CBE Chief Financial Officer Isabel Made described the innovation as paperless, time-saving, transparent, and accessible to all suppliers.

During a question-and-answer session, several local suppliers appealed to the Bank to regulate the allocation of tenders to South African companies, arguing that Eswatini suppliers should be prioritised whenever local capability exists.

"Can we be considered as the first choice, before the bank awards tenders and procures from foreign countries. We need to see the bank as the biggest supporter of local," said Philasande Matsebula during the question-and-answer session. The room fully endorsed the statement.

"Why are Foreign companies being awarded these tenders and considered before us when we are literally here at gone doing the same thing," asked another supplier.

In response, Bank officials said the matter would be reviewed, but noted recurring issues with some local businesses, including misrepresentation and failure to deliver on contracts.

"In certain cases, we've had to turn to South African suppliers because some local companies over-promise and under-deliver," said Dlamini.

Despite these challenges, CBE reaffirmed its commitment to nurturing local enterprise through transparency and technology-driven procurement systems.

The Bank said the e-Procurement platform will enhance oversight and reduce administrative inefficiencies.

Supplier attendance surges from 150 to 450

# 90% of procurement stays in Eswatini



▲CBE Chief Financial Officer Isabel Made.



▲Deputy Director Supply Chain Warren Dlamini.



▲A section of the 450 suppliers that attended.

The 2025 Annual Supplier Day marked a significant increase in participation, with nearly 450 suppliers attending the event at the CBE Complex.

This represents a threefold rise from the 2021 event, which attracted only 150 suppliers.

CBE Chief Financial Officer Isabel Made said the growth in attendance reflects confidence in the Bank's procurement policies and the expanding capacity of local businesses to meet national demand.

"The increase in supplier participation shows that more companies are engaging with opportunities at the Bank, and it is a positive sign for Eswatini's economy," Made said.

Deputy Director Supply Chain Warren Dlamini highlighted that the rise in attendance also provides a broader platform for suppliers to network, collaborate, and showcase their capabilities.

The Bank said the event offered opportunities for businesses to understand procurement requirements, ask questions, and build relationships with procurement officials.

Officials noted that the increase in participation is indicative of a maturing supplier sector in Eswatini.

The Bank encouraged local businesses to continue strengthening their capacity and reliability to ensure they can meet procurement standards.

The 2025 event also coincided with the launch of the CBE's e-Procurement system,

providing attendees with a firsthand demonstration of the Bank's digital platform and guidance on how to navigate the new processes.

The Central Bank of Eswatini's new e-Procurement system will be live on Monday, 20 October 2025. Suppliers can access the platform via [www.centralbank.org.sz/tenders](http://www.centralbank.org.sz/tenders). The system allows suppliers to view, apply for, and track tenders digitally, eliminating the need for paper-based submissions.

The platform is designed to be user-friendly, transparent, and accessible to all qualified suppliers. The Bank encourages all suppliers to register and familiarise themselves with the system ahead of the official launch to ensure timely participation in upcoming procurement opportunities.

Bank spends over E150 million on local procurement

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has demonstrated its commitment to supporting domestic businesses, revealing that over E150 million has been spent on local procurement for ongoing infrastructure projects at its Ezulwini complex.

Speaking at the 2025 CBE Supplier Day, Deputy Director of Procurement, Warren Dlamini, said the Bank continues to prioritise Eswatini-registered companies in its tendering processes.

"Our investment in local suppliers reflects our belief in the capacity and potential of

emaSwati businesses," Dlamini said.

The procurement includes contracts for construction, maintenance, and other services carried out by local contractors.

Dlamini also highlighted that the Bank's upcoming head office project will require a minimum of 30 per cent local participation, ensuring domestic businesses benefit from this landmark development.

Dlamini said these initiatives are part of the Bank's broader strategy to circulate money within the national economy, foster skills development, and strengthen partnerships with the local business community.

"This demonstrates our continued support for sustainable growth and the development of a strong supplier base in Eswatini," he said.

CBE warns suppliers against corrupt practices

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has issued a firm message to suppliers and contractors, urging them to maintain ethical standards and avoid any practices that could compromise the Bank's integrity.

Speaking at the 2025 Supplier Day, Deputy Director of Procurement, Warren Dlamini, emphasised the importance of transparency and professionalism in all dealings with the Bank.

"We are wearing this badge of ethics with pride," Dlamini said, referring to the Bank's CIPS Corporate Ethics Award, which recognises adherence to international standards of integrity in procurement.

He cautioned that corruption involves both parties the giver and the receiver, he stressed that unethical behaviour undermines trust, fair competition, and sustainable development.

"In corruption, there are two parties, the corruptor and the corruptee. One offers, one accepts. So it cannot be one-sided. We are asking you, don't impose that on us," Dlamini said.

The Deputy Director also reminded suppliers that tenders are awarded solely on merit, supported by transparent evaluation and verification procedures.

"If you price well and submit a strong proposal, you will get the job. Every payment we make is backed by internal and external validation," he said.

Dlamini concluded by stressing that partnerships with the Bank should be grounded in integrity, quality, and shared values, reinforcing a supplier community built on ethical business practices.



By Lewis Krauskopf

NEW YORK — Earnings reports next week, including from Tesla and Netflix will provide a deeper look at U.S. corporate profits while delayed U.S. inflation data will mark another test of the stock market, which has become shakier even as it remains around record highs.

The fourth year of the S&P 500's bull run kicked off this week with some significant gyrations after a long period of market calm.

Revived U.S.-China trade tensions and credit concerns at regional U.S. banks drove the anxiety.

The CBOE market volatility index, known as Wall Street's "fear gauge", has surged in recent days and hit its highest level in nearly six months on Friday.

"The market is becoming more volatile, but it's also coming off of a very non-volatile period where we didn't have a lot of risk catalysts bubbling to the top," said Michael Reynolds, vice president of investment strategy at Glenmede.

"Once you have valuations hit sort of full levels, as we're seeing now almost across the board, you have to be on the lookout for incremental risk catalysts."

The spark for the latest volatility was a surprise resurgence in U.S.-China trade tensions. Stocks slumped late last week after the U.S. threatened to significantly hike tariffs by November 1 over China's rare-earth export controls.

The U.S.-China trade issue will be key for markets in the coming week, said Doug Beath, global equity strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. U.S. President Donald Trump confirmed on Friday that he would meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping in two weeks in South Korea.

Sharp swings in global financial shares to

# US stocks to be tested by Tesla, Netflix earnings



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

end the week also kept investors on edge as they weighed the extent of credit concerns emerging from regional U.S. banks.

Major stock indexes posted weekly gains and are on pace for strong years. The benchmark S&P 500 is up 13.3 per cent year-to-date and 1.3 per cent below its record high. But there are signs the market is weakening under the surface.

The percentage of S&P 500 stocks in some form of an uptrend declined from 77 per cent in early July to 57 per cent as of Tuesday while the number of stocks in a downtrend increased from 23 per cent to 44 per cent

over that time, according to Adam Turnquist, chief technical strategist for LPL Financial.

That "narrowing gap highlights emerging cracks in the market's foundation," Turnquist said in written commentary. Similarly, Kevin Gordon, senior investment strategist at Charles Schwab, said he will be watching how broadly based the market's gains are going forward.

"If you have a fewer number of companies that are actually moving higher, but the indexes do move higher because of the megacaps, that's a really important divergence," Gordon said.

Attention will be on third-quarter earnings after major banks started the reporting season on a strong note. Aside from streaming giant Netflix and electric vehicle maker Tesla, other companies due to report in the coming week include consumer companies Procter & Gamble and Coca-Cola, aerospace and defense giant RTX and tech stalwart IBM.

The corporate results and executive comments will offer insight into the economy as the U.S. government shutdown has stopped economic data releases since October 1, including monthly employment data.

Corporate "reports and what companies say is really our best chance at assessing what the broader economic health is," Gordon said.

The government has said it will release the U.S. consumer price index for September on Friday, nine days late, saying the CPI data allows the Social Security Administration to meet deadlines for timely payment of benefits.

The CPI report, which is a closely watched inflation gauge, will be released days before the Federal Reserve's next monetary policy meeting on October 28-29. The U.S. central bank is widely expected to cut interest rates by a quarter percentage point again, after weakening jobs data prompted the Fed to lower rates last month for the first time this year.

"We'd really have to see something out of left field in terms of notable inflation pressures to knock the Fed off of a rate cut path at the October meeting," Glenmede's Reynolds said. (Reuters)



▲ Buildings are seen in the Central Business District (CBD) in the capital Gaborone, Botswana.

## Moody's cuts Botswana's rating by a notch to 'Baa1' amid diamond industry slump

GLOBAL credit ratings agency Moody's downgraded Botswana's rating to 'Baa1' from 'A3' on Friday, citing the government's challenges in adjusting to a structural downturn in the diamond industry and increasing government debt.

"The economy remains heavily reliant on capital-intensive diamond mining; diversification efforts lag due to reform delays, while exposure to climate shocks persist," Moody's said in a statement. Long viewed as an African economic success story, Botswana is in a slump due to a prolonged downturn in the global diamond market, its key export, with demand hurt by global economic uncertainty and the rising popularity of lab-grown stones.

The world's leading producer of diamonds

by value, whose diamond exports continue to drive foreign exchange, has seen sector weakness widen its current account deficit and push reserves to a historic low, according to Moody's.

It expects Botswana's economy to likely decline by an additional 6% in 2025 as it remains exposed to global demand shocks and technological disruption from lab-grown alternatives and changes in consumer preferences.

Last month, peer agency S&P cut Botswana's rating to 'BBB' as it expects weak global diamond demand and prices will keep the Southern African country's external and fiscal flow positions weak.

The agency said the global diamond downturn is unlikely to reverse, while maintaining the country's outlook at 'negative'. (Reuters)

## Banking shares' wobbles reveal growing unease over credit risks

NEW YORK/LONDON/SINGAPORE

— A clutch of bad loans at banks in recent weeks has shaken investor confidence in banking shares, which gyrated sharply late this week as unease mounted over credit risks that threatened to spill into the broader markets.

The markets have weathered a string of credit scares and surprise write-downs over the past two years, but sentiment took a particularly hard knock in recent days from auto bankruptcies and alleged fraud that resulted in losses at several banks.

The latest scare came on Thursday when Zions Bancorporation disclosed losses tied to two commercial and industrial loans and Western Alliance said it had initiated a lawsuit alleging fraud by Cantor Group V, LLC. Cantor denies the allegations.

### Variety of issues fuel credit concerns

"Markets have been gripped by a sense of fear and panic in the last couple of days," said Timothy Coffey, associate director of depository research at Janney Montgomery Scott.

"There are different issues that are being conflated into one big issue about credit concerns."

Pressure on bank stocks "is likely to continue, this panic is like a fever. Once it enters the system, it takes a while to leave," Coffey



▲ A trader works on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City, U.S. said.

The banking sector's exposure to two recent U.S. auto bankruptcies, at First Brands and Tricolor, has also rekindled concerns about lending standards more than two years after Silicon Valley Bank's failure triggered broader turmoil.

"In the post-SVB world, regulators have been asking banks about their commercial real estate exposure, the percentage of their uninsured deposits, deposit strategy, how they are set up at the discount window, and those conversations have not changed," said Dan Hartman, a lawyer at Nutter.

Still, many played down any parallels with the regional banking crisis in 2023, which was marked by the failure of several mid-sized banks including Silicon Valley Bank.

"I would not equate what happened this week to the 2023 banking crisis," said Fifth Third CEO Tim Spence. He said investors now were reacting to losses they did not understand well, but he expected shares would recover as more information is released. (Reuters)



# Zimbabwe's ruling party resolves to extend president's term to 2030

ZIMBABWE'S ruling ZANU-PF party plans to amend the constitution to extend President Emmerson Mnangagwa's term by two years to 2030, a move opposition politicians have condemned as unlawful. The proposal, adopted at a party conference late on Saturday, would prolong the 83-year-old president's second five-year term, currently set to end in 2028.

The resolution comes amid a succession battle within ZANU-PF, where Mnangagwa's main internal rival, former army general Constantino Chiwenga, has been accused of treasonous acts.

"The party and government are therefore directed to initiate the requisite legislative amendments to give full effect to this resolution to ensure continuity, stability and the sustained transformation of the nation," Ziyambi Ziyambi, ZANU-PF secretary for legal affairs and Minister of Justice, told delegates.

Jameson Timba, a veteran politician and senior leader in a fractured opposition movement, said that Zimbabwe should not be governed by conference resolutions or partisan directives.

"We are a constitutional democracy and the supremacy of the Constitution must remain non-negotiable," he said in a statement on Sunday.

Timba called for formal clarification from the speaker of parliament and the minister of justice, and urged "civic vigilance and peaceful defence" of constitutionalism.

# Egyptians call for Rafah border crossing with Gaza Strip to be reopened

As desperately needed humanitarian aid remains scarce in Gaza, Egyptians are calling for the reopening of the Rafah border crossing.

The call comes as the Israeli army confirmed it carried out air strikes today in the Palestinian town on the border with Egypt.

As part of the first phase of the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, Israel was scheduled to reopen the Rafah crossing on Wednesday.

Many Egyptians in Cairo expressed solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza, saying reopening this crucial aid crossing could save many lives.

"This is the wish of all Egyptians for the past two years, for the borders to be opened. We wish that aid will enter Gaza and we wish for this humanitarian crisis to end," said Cairo resident, Jada.

Others expressed their determination to assist Palestinians, describing them as their brothers and sisters.

"They are our brothers, or like our family. And we will do all we can to help them," said Maryam, who also lives in the Egyptian capital.

Israel on Saturday said the crossing between Egypt and Gaza would remain closed until further notice.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said its reopening would de-



▲ Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa attends a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Grand Palace at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia.

Mnangagwa, who has previously said he is not interested in clinging to power, came to office in a 2017 military coup that ousted founding leader Robert Mugabe.

The constitution requires him to step down in 2028 after serving two five-year terms.

ZANU-PF has ruled the Southern African nation since independence from Britain in 1980 and holds a commanding majority in parliament as the government tries to rebuild a

weak economy and reduce crippling debt obligations.

"It is going to be the biggest challenge to the democratic forces in the nation on how we are going to respond to this huge provocation by a political party whose modus of operation has always been predatory," Job Sikhala, facilitator of the National Democratic Working Group, an advocacy body, told Reuters.

(Reuters)



pend on Hamas handing over the bodies of deceased hostages.

One week into the increasingly fragile ceasefire, the opening of the crossing is crucial to the delivery of large amounts of aid.

But Israel and Hamas have been trading blame over alleged violations of the US-mediated ceasefire

for days.

Egyptian Red Crescent Society vehicles loaded with supplies and mobile clinics are waiting at the border post to enter the enclave where the humanitarian situation remains dire.

(Reuters)

# Israel strikes Gaza and halts aid

ISRAEL launched a series of strikes in Gaza on Sunday and said it was halting aid into the enclave in response to attacks on its forces, the military said, in the most serious test yet of this month's U.S.-brokered ceasefire.

Residents in Gaza and local health authorities said Israeli airstrikes and tank fire across the enclave killed at least 18 people, including at least one woman.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had ordered the military to respond forcefully to what he described as Hamas' violations of the ceasefire. The military said militants in the southern area of Rafah had launched an anti-tank missile and fired on its soldiers.

## PATH TO PEACE IS UNCERTAIN

The armed wing of Hamas said it remained committed to the ceasefire agreement, was unaware of clashes in Rafah, and had not been in contact with groups there since March.

An Israeli security official said that the transfer of aid into Gaza has been halted until further notice, following what he described as Hamas' blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Fearing the truce may collapse, some Palestinians rushed to buy goods from a main market in Nuseirat camp and families quit their homes in Khan Younis further south, after airstrikes hit nearby.

The strikes were reminiscent of Israel's response to what it viewed as serious violations of its ceasefire with Hamas' Lebanese ally Hezbollah in late 2024, less than a week after it came into effect and after days of mutual accusations of truce breaches, though that ceasefire has since largely held.

But formidable obstacles remain in the way of a durable peace in Gaza, where a ceasefire collapsed in March after nearly two months of relative calm when Israel unleashed a barrage of airstrikes.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said the "yellow line" to where

Israeli forces had pulled back under the ceasefire agreement would be physically marked and that any violation of the ceasefire or attempt to cross the line would be met with fire.

Hamas detailed what it said was a series of violations by Israel that it says have left 46 people dead and stopped essential supplies from reaching the enclave.

On Saturday, Israel said the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt, which had been expected to be reopened this week, would remain closed and that its reopening would depend on Hamas fulfilling its obligations under the ceasefire.

Israel says Hamas is being too slow in handing over bodies of deceased hostages. Hamas last week released all 20 living hostages it had been holding and in the following days has handed over 12 of the 28 deceased captives.

## HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS AFFECTED BY FAMINE

The group says it has no interest in keeping the bodies of remaining hostages and that special equipment is needed to recover corpses buried under rubble.

The Rafah crossing has largely been shut since May 2024. The ceasefire deal also includes the ramping up of aid to Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of people were determined in August to be affected by famine, according to the IPC global hunger monitor.

The crossing has in previous ceasefires functioned as a key conduit for humanitarian aid to flow into the enclave.

Although the flow of aid through another crossing had, until Sunday's decision to halt aid, increased significantly since the ceasefire began, the United Nations says far more is needed.

Key questions of Hamas disarming, the future governance of Gaza, the make-up of an international "stabilization force", and moves towards the creation of a Palestinian state have yet to be resolved.

(Reuters)





# Micron to exit server chips business in China after ban



▲ A Micron logo appears in this illustration.

MICRON plans to stop supplying server chips to data centres in China after the business failed to recover from a 2023 government ban on its products in critical Chinese infrastructure, two people briefed on the decision said. Micron was the first U.S. chipmaker to be targeted by Beijing - a move that was seen as retaliatory for a series of curbs by Washington aimed at impeding tech progress by China's semiconductor industry. Shares of the chipmaker were down about 1%.

Since then, both Nvidia and Intel chips have similarly fielded accusations from Chinese authorities and an industry group of posing security risks, though there has not been any regulatory action.

**LENOVO TO REMAIN A CUSTOMER**

Micron will continue to sell to two Chinese customers that have significant data centre operations outside China, one of which is laptop maker Lenovo (0992.HK), opens new tab, the people said.

The U.S. company, which made \$3.4 billion or 12% of its total revenue from mainland China in its last business year, will also continue to sell chips to auto and mobile phone sector customers in the world's second-largest economy, one person said.

Asked about the exit from its China data centre business, Micron said in a statement to Reuters that the division had been impacted by the ban, and it abides by applicable regulations where it does business.

Lenovo did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"Micron will look for customers outside of China in other parts of Asia, Europe and Latin America," said Jacob Bourne, analyst at Emarketer.

"China is a critical market, however, we're seeing data center expansion globally fueled by AI demand, and so Micron is betting that it will be able to make up for lost business in other markets," he added.

U.S.-Sino trade tensions and tech rivalry have only escalated since 2018, when U.S. President Donald Trump began imposing tariffs on Chinese goods during his first term. That same year, Washington ramped up accusations against Chinese tech giant Huawei (HWT.UL), accusing it of representing a national security risk, imposing sanctions a year later.

Huawei has denied those charges. Nvidia and Intel have also denied charges that their products pose risks to Chinese national se-

curity. Micron also said in 2023, before the conclusion of China's probe, that it stood by the security of its products.

Currently, the U.S. has sanctioned hundreds of Chinese entities. China, which is more reliant on imported tech, has taken far fewer regulatory actions.

**LOSING OUT ON CHINA'S AI BOOM**

The ban on Micron products in critical infrastructure by China - the world's second-largest market for server memory - has meant the company has missed out on the

country's data centre expansion boom.

That's benefited rivals Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix, as well as Chinese companies YMTC and CXMT, which have been aggressively expanding with the support of the Chinese government.

Investment by data centres used in computing in China surged ninefold to 24.7 billion yuan (\$3.4 billion) last year, according to a Reuters review of government procurement documents.

That said, Micron's challenges in China have been offset by huge demand for data centres and related tools elsewhere, thanks to the global adoption of artificial intelligence. That's helped the company report record quarterly revenue.

According to a third source, Micron's data centre team in China employs over 300 people. Reuters was not able to immediately establish how many jobs may be affected.

Micron has been downsizing in other areas in China. In August, it laid off a few hundred people in its universal flash storage programme after deciding to cease development of future mobile NAND products globally, according to the South China Morning Post.

Areas where it has continued to expand in China include its chip packaging facility in the city of Xian.

"We have a strong operating and customer presence in China, and China remains an important market for Micron and the semiconductor industry in general," Micron said in its statement to Reuters.

(Reuters)

## Nexperia says Chinese unit operating as usual as tensions with the Netherlands run high

Nexperia said on Sunday that its employees in China still have access to company platforms and are receiving salaries as usual, a day after its China unit asserted that it had the right to operate independently of the Dutch parent.

"We are aware of a message circulated by individuals at Nexperia China falsely claiming that Nexperia and the Dutch government have abandoned the Chinese market and that the factory is now operating under a new entity," the Dutch chipmaker told Reuters.

The company said any statements about salaries not being paid are "factually incorrect and misleading."

On Saturday, Nexperia's China unit said it complies with Chinese laws and has the right to operate independently, a day after the Netherlands said talks had begun to try to ease tensions over export controls.

A notice on its official WeChat account said all of its employees continue to work under the unit's instructions, and may reject any "external instructions" not approved by its Chinese legal representative. The U.S. National Security Agency has been carrying out a cyber attack operation on the National Time Service Center over an extended period of time, China's State Security Ministry said in a statement on its WeChat account on Sunday.

The ministry said it found evidence tracing stolen data and credentials as far back as 2022, which were used to spy on the staff's mobile devices and network systems at the centre.

The U.S. intelligence agency had "exploited a vulnerability" in the messaging service of a foreign smartphone brand to access staff members' devices in 2022, the ministry said,

without naming the brand.

The national time centre is a research institute under the Chinese Academy of Sciences that generates, maintains and broadcasts China's standard time.

The ministry's investigation also found that the United States launched attacks on the centre's internal network systems and attempted to attack the high-precision ground-based timing system in 2023 and 2024.

The U.S. embassy did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China and the U.S. have increasingly traded accusations of cyberattacks in the past few years, each portraying the other as its primary cyber threat.

The latest accusations come amid renewed trade tensions over China's expanded rare earths export controls, and the U.S. threatening to further raise tariffs on Chinese goods.

It said salaries and bonuses will continue to be paid out by Nexperia China, not Nexperia Netherlands.

Amid the United States and China trade tensions, the Dutch government took control of Nexperia on September 30 and removed its Chinese CEO, Zhang Xuezheng.

The Dutch government cited the possible transfer of technology to Nexperia's Chinese parent company, Wingtech (600745.SS), opens new tab. Nexperia makes chips for carmakers and for consumer electronics.

Days later, China's commerce ministry on October 4 blocked Nexperia from exporting chips from China.

"This situation has arisen from the unauthorised actions of our former CEO Wing Zhang (Xuezheng), who has been formally suspended by a competent court...and has no authority to represent Nexperia," the



▲ The logo of Chinese-owned semiconductor company Nexperia is pictured in Hamburg, Germany.

Dutch chipmaker said.

Nexperia has reported Zhang's actions to Dutch authorities and said it remains committed to employees and customers in China. Nexperia did not specify what unauthorised actions its former CEO had taken.

Wingtech and Nexperia China did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The dispute has raised fears in the global automotive and electronic industries of possible chip shortages that could disrupt production.

Nexperia's chips, though not technically sophisticated, are widely used in high vol-

umes.

Its biggest manufacturing site is in Hamburg, Germany, but according to two sources briefed on the matter, more than 70% of Nexperia's chips are shipped back to China to be packaged in Dongguan, a manufacturing hub in China's southern Guangdong province.

Volkswagen and BMW both said they were working to identify potential supply risks, but that production in Europe had not been impacted yet. (Reuters)



A massive fire at the import cargo complex of Dhaka airport has caused extensive damage to goods and materials belonging to major garment exporters, with losses and impacts on trade likely to run into millions of dollars, industry leaders said on Sunday.

The blaze broke out on Saturday afternoon in the import section of the airport's cargo village, forcing a temporary suspension of flights. Smoke continued to rise from the charred remains of the facility on Sunday as firefighters and airport officials assessed the damage.

The fire gutted storage areas used for imported raw materials, ready-to-export apparel, and product samples — all essential to Bangladesh's \$47 billion garment industry.

"This incident has caused serious damage to the country's export trade, especially the garment sector," said Inamul Haq Khan, senior vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

"High-value goods and urgent air shipments have been destroyed — including garments prepared for shipment, raw materials for production, and, most importantly, product samples."

He warned that the loss of samples could jeopardise future business. "These samples are essential for securing new buyers and expanding orders. Losing them means our members may miss out on future opportunities," he added.

ESSENTIAL SAMPLES BURNED IN FIRE

BGMEA has begun gathering information from affected exporters to determine the extent of the losses. "We have asked all members to submit detailed lists of damaged goods, and an online portal has been launched to speed up data collection," Khan added.

Pakistan and Afghanistan agree to immediate ceasefire after peace talks in Doha

AFGHANISTAN and Pakistan agreed to an immediate ceasefire during talks in Doha, both sides said on Sunday, after a week of fierce border clashes, the worst violence between the South Asian neighbours since the Taliban seized power in Kabul in 2021.

The ceasefire "has been finalised", Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif posted on X on Sunday, saying both sides would meet again on October 25 in Istanbul to discuss "detailed matters".

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement the parties agreed on a complete and meaningful ceasefire.

Qatar's foreign ministry, which mediated Saturday's talks along with Turkey, said the follow-up meetings were meant "to ensure the sustainability of the ceasefire and verify its implementation in a reliable and sustainable manner".

MILITANT ATTACKS, AIRSTRIKES

Pakistan and Afghanistan are seeking a way forward after the clashes killed dozens and wounded hundreds. The talks were led by Asif and his Afghan counterpart, Mullah Muhammad Yaqoob, both sides said.

The ground fighting between the one-time allies and Pakistani airstrikes across their contested 2,600-km (1,600-mile) frontier were triggered after Islamabad demanded that Kabul rein in militants who had stepped up attacks in Pakistan, saying they operated from havens in Afghanistan.

The Taliban denies giving haven to militants to attack Pakistan and accuses the Pakistani military of spreading misinformation about Afghanistan and sheltering Islamic State-linked militants to undermine its stability and sovereignty. Islamabad denies the



Fire at airport cargo complex disrupts Bangladesh's garment exports

The airport cargo village is one of Bangladesh's busiest logistics hubs, handling more than 600 metric tons of dry cargo daily — a figure that doubles during the October to December peak season.

"Every day, around 200 to 250 factories send their products by air," Khan said. "Given that scale, the financial impact is significant."

The cause of the blaze has not yet been determined, and an investigation is underway.

The incident marks the third major fire reported in Bangladesh this week. A fire on Tuesday at a garment factory and an adjacent chemical warehouse in Dhaka killed at least 16 people and injured others. On Thursday, another burned down a seven-storey garment factory building in an export processing zone in Chittagong.

Bangladesh is the world's second-largest exporter of apparel after China. The sector, which supplies major global retailers such as

Walmart, H&M, and Gap, employs about 4 million workers and generates around \$40 billion a year — more than a tenth of the country's GDP.

The fire, which struck during the peak export season, is expected to delay shipments and pose additional challenges in meeting international delivery deadlines.

(Reuters)



▲ Tommy Fleetwood.

accusations.

Militants have been waging a war for years against the Pakistani state in a bid to overthrow the government and replace it with their strict brand of Islamic governance.

On Friday, a suicide attack near the border killed seven Pakistani soldiers and wounded 13, security officials said.

"The Afghan regime must rein in the proxies who have sanctuaries in Afghanistan and are using Afghan soil to perpetrate heinous attacks inside Pakistan," the Pakistan Army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, said on Saturday, addressing a graduation ceremony of cadets.

The Taliban spokesperson said that at the Doha talks, "It was decided that neither country will take hostile actions against the other, and support will not be provided to groups operating against the government of Pakistan."

In a follow-up post on X, he said it reflected Taliban's longstanding position that Afghanistan's territory will not be used against any other country.

The statements made about the agree-

ment do not constitute a joint declaration, he said.

AFGHANISTAN WITHDRAWS FROM CRICKET SERIES OVER STRIKES

Afghan government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said Pakistan had conducted airstrikes in Afghanistan hours after the ceasefire, which began on Wednesday, was extended on Friday for as long as the Doha talks continued.

He said the attacks targeted civilians, adding that Kabul reserved the right to respond but that Afghan fighters had been directed to refrain from retaliating to respect the negotiating team.

Afghanistan withdrew from the cricket Twenty20 international tri-series in Pakistan next month after the deaths of three local cricketers that the Afghanistan Cricket Board said were due to military strikes in Paktika province.

Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said in a post on X on Saturday that Pakistan had struck "verified" camps of Islamist militants along the border areas and rejected that the strikes had targeted civilians.

He said militants had attempted to launch multiple attacks inside Pakistan during the ceasefire period.

He said more than 100 militants were killed by Pakistani security forces, the majority of them in strikes against a militant group that he said had carried out Friday's suicide attack on the military camp.

(Reuters)





▲ Donald was charismatic on stage during his performance at Umuthi Fest 2025 at Mavuso Trade Centre.



▲ Mawelele enticing fun lovers.



▲ Aubrey Qwana in his element.



▲ Naledi Aphwe rendering her set.

By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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UMUTHI Fest 2025 delivered a spectacular dose of groove, colour, and pure joy, turning the Mavuso Trade Centre into a cauldron of energy, rhythm, and unity on Saturday night.

What was billed as a celebration of music and culture quickly transformed into one of the most memorable nights of the year for local and regional music lovers. The festival, which featured performances from its visionaries Blaq Diamond and company, lived up to its billing as a “musical vaccine,” a curative blend of artistry, sound, and emotion. It was an event that reaffirmed Eswatini’s growing appetite for world-class entertainment and showcased the depth of talent on both the local and South African fronts.

The evening kicked off with local acts that set the tone for a night that would later burst into a rhythm of flames. DJ Ayacity was among the first to ignite the decks, drawing early cheers from the audience with a perfectly curated set that kept the growing crowd on their feet. His seamless mixing and ability to sense the audience’s pulse ensured that the night began on an exhilarating note.

Then came Lady Zee, who proved once again why she remains one of Eswatini’s most celebrated female DJs. She spun her magic with breathtaking precision, dropping hit after hit that electrified the crowd. Her set was a vibrant fusion of Amapiano, house, and afrobeat rhythms, a sonic journey that left no one standing still. “Lady Zee really brought fire to the stage,” one fan shouted amid the flashing lights and waving hands, summing up the sentiment of many in attendance.

The mood then took a soulful turn when Linda Dlamini graced the stage, blending praise and celebration in a performance that touched hearts. His rendition of Phathi Igama Lika Jesu echoed through the venue as hundreds of voices joined in, transforming the festival grounds into a spontaneous choir. His segment served as a powerful reminder that spirituality and celebration can coexist harmoniously on one stage.

Not to be outdone, Culolam brought a thunderous energy behind the decks, keeping the momentum alive with irresistible beats that drew cheers from every corner of the Trade Centre. Shortly after, Gifted Kosie made her grand entrance, a multi-talented performer who seamlessly

# Umuthi Fest jabs a dose of groove



▲ Funlovers ecstatic during the event.

fused her DJ skills with dance artistry. Her set, accompanied by a team of dazzling dancers, was an explosive visual and musical spectacle. She moved to her own rhythm, commanding the stage with charisma that left the audience enthralled.

## Intensified

The groove intensified when M Nation took the spotlight, accompanied by fellow performers Histo, DJ Citie, and Cool Drop. Together, they delivered a thrilling collaborative set filled with energy, unity, and homegrown pride. Their performance embodied the spirit of Umuthi Fest, a musical celebration of collective creativity and cultural exchange.

When Young Zesh, currently hailed as one of the best artists in Eswatini, stepped onto the stage, the atmosphere shifted from excitement to sheer euphoria. His arrival was greeted by a deafening roar from fans who had waited eagerly for his set. He performed some of his biggest hits, including Liphasele, Kogcina Bani, and Sivumeleni. Each lyric was met with choruses of fans singing along word-for-word, waving their hands in rhythm.

“Zesh is the heartbeat of the youth,” one

young reveller remarked. “His songs speak to us and seeing him perform live just hits different.” Indeed, it was a performance that reminded everyone why Young Zesh continues to dominate Eswatini’s music scene, a blend of authenticity, stage presence, and connection that few can replicate.

## Energy

The energy soared even higher when South African sensations Xowla and Siya Ntuli, both signed under Inkabi Records, took over the stage. Their set brought an unmistakable Inkabi flair, soulful vocals intertwined with the rich storytelling typical of the label’s musical identity. Fans waved their phones in the air, illuminating the venue in a sea of lights as the duo performed their popular tracks to resounding applause.

Their performance symbolised a bridge between Eswatini and South Africa’s music scenes, two nations linked by rhythm, language, and a shared love for good music. As the night reached its crescendo, the stage transformed into a constellation of stars. Makhosi, Donald, Naledi Aphwe, Mlindo The Vocalist, Mawelele, and Aubrey Qwana each graced the microphone, delivering back-to-back performances that turned the

Trade Centre into a musical wonderland.

Donald, the smooth-voiced crooner, serenaded the audience with his signature love anthems, while Mlindo The Vocalist’s soulful delivery left fans swaying and singing along. Naledi Aphwe, the young powerhouse whose vocals have captivated the continent, showcased her maturity and control, proving that age is no barrier to brilliance. Mawelele brought his infectious rhythm, while Aubrey Qwana’s heartfelt performance stitched a perfect emotional thread through the night’s tapestry of sound.

Then came the moment everyone had been waiting for, Blaq Diamond, the mastermind behind Umuthi Fest, stepped onto the stage to deliver a finale that could only be described as cinematic. Their arrival was met with wild cheers, flashing cameras, and thunderous applause. The duo performed a setlist packed with fan favourites, blending rich harmonies, poetic lyrics, and that unmistakable Afro-soul-meets-hip-hop flair that has made them one of Southern Africa’s most beloved acts. Songs like Ibhanoyi, SummerYoMuthi, and Love Letter had fans dancing, singing, and losing themselves in every note.





▲ Miss Cultural Heritage Eswatini 2025 finalists.

- MISS CULTURAL HERITAGE ESWATINI 2025 / 26 -

# Top 12 finalists unveiled

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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THE Eswatini National Council of Arts and Culture (ENCAC) has proudly revealed the Top 12 finalists for the Miss Cultural Heritage Eswatini 2025/26 edition in a grand ceremony held on October 17, 2025, at the Mountain View Hotel in Mbabane.

The finalists representing the Hhohho Region are Thubelihle Mnisi, Vuyile Dlamini, and Andile Kunene. From the Manzini Region, the finalists include Nobuhle Shabangu, Yoliswa Manana, and Ayanda Dlamini. The Shiselweni Region is represented by Wethu Mavuso, Siphелеle Dlamini, and Sinenkhosi Dlamini. Lastly, the Lubombo Region's finalists are Takitsi Mamba, Zethu Magagula, and Siphesihle Gwebu.

The unveiling event was honoured by the presence of the Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs, Bongani Nzima,

along with several distinguished guests, underscoring the significance of this cultural celebration. The ceremony was led by the outgoing Miss Cultural Heritage, Gcinizwe Tsikati, who shared the stage with co-host Sancheziey, creating an engaging and festive atmosphere.

A key highlight of the event was the official opening of the Lassies Crafts Store, a major sponsor of the pageant. This new store symbolises a growing partnership between the creative arts sector and local businesses, aimed at promoting youth entrepreneurship, cultural empowerment, and the commercial development of Eswatini's rich heritage.

### Finalists

The twelve finalists were carefully chosen from across Eswatini's four regions, each representing the unique spirit, values, and traditions of their communities. These young women will embark on a journey that includes cultural training, educational workshops, and community development projects. These activities are designed to deepen their appreciation of Eswatini's

heritage and prepare them for leadership roles that extend beyond the pageant stage.

Minister Bongani Nzima delivered a keynote address praising ENCAC and its partners for their efforts in safeguarding and promoting the nation's cultural identity. He highlighted how the pageant aligns with His Majesty King Mswati III's 'Nkwe' call to action.

The pageant's mandate is to preserve, promote, and commercialise Eswatini's national culture. Minister Nzima described the Lassies Crafts Store not merely as a business but as a "living gallery" that showcases the creativity, pride, and resilience of the Eswatini people.

This year's Miss Cultural Heritage pageant goes beyond showcasing beauty and talent; it is a platform for cultural education and community engagement. The finalists' involvement in cultural and social initiatives reflects the pageant's broader mission to empower young women as custodians of Eswatini's heritage and as leaders who can drive positive change in their communities.

## 'Culolam' breaks down success of Farmers Market

MBEKEZELI 'Culolam' Dlamini, the director of the Eswatini Farmers Market, shared the ingredients behind this year's event's success, which he attributed to several key factors.

The fourth edition of the Eswatini Farmers Market, held on October 11, 2025, at the picturesque Malkerns Country Club, was a vibrant celebration of culture, lifestyle, and community spirit. Featuring renowned South African artists such as Sun El Musician, Mörda, MaWhoo, and Kenza, the market offered an unforgettable experience that resonated with attendees from across the region.

"With a strong and dedicated team by your side, you can never go wrong," he explained. Dlamini also highlighted the importance of strategic activations before the event, including participation at the Nkomazi Farmers Market, which helped broaden the market's reach. This outreach attracted attendees not only from Eswatini but also from neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe, enriching the event's multicultural atmosphere.

In terms of attendance, Dlamini confidently stated, "For now, I'm safe to say we had over 5,000 attendees." When asked whether this was the most successful edition of the market to date, Dlamini affirmed that the 2025 event had indeed surpassed all previous editions. "With good weather and



▲ Farmer's Market director Mbekezeli 'Culolam' Dlamini.

good vibes, this fourth edition outshone the rest," he remarked, emphasising the perfect combination of factors that contributed to the market's outstanding performance.

### Perspective

Regarding the Eswatini Farmers Market's standing among the country's top events, Dlamini offered a measured perspective. "As a relative newcomer, the Eswatini Farmers Market is establishing itself as a significant

event, but it is not yet on the same level as the country's most renowned shows, particularly the internationally acclaimed MTN Bushfire Festival," he noted. He explained that comparisons depend heavily on the criteria used for rating but confidently positioned the market as "a top contender in the rising category of lifestyle events," signaling its potential for further growth and prominence.



▲ Mngqobi.

## Mngqobi, Thick B to host Eswatini Lifestyle Awards

CHARISMATIC program directors Mngqobi Tsabedze and Thick B are set to host the newly rebranded Eswatini Lifestyle Awards.

Scheduled for November 29, 2025, at the prestigious Mavuso Trade Centre, the Eswatini Lifestyle Awards will unfold over several exciting hours. The festivities begin with a red-carpet event from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm, offering attendees a chance to witness the arrival of Eswatini's most influential figures in style.

Following this, a lively karaoke session from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm will engage guests in an interactive and entertaining warm-up before the main awards ceremony, which will run until 10:00 pm. Ticket prices are set at E250 for general admission and E350 for VIP access, making the event accessible while offering premium experiences for select guests.

The transformation from the former Jumbo Festival to the Eswatini Lifestyle Awards marks a significant strategic shift. This rebranding effort is designed to broaden the event's scope and enhance its prestige by explicitly highlighting the awards component. The change reflects a deeper commitment to acknowledging the outstanding achievements of individuals and organisations that shape Eswatini's vibrant lifestyle sectors, including business, leadership, corporate affairs, culture, fashion, and creativity.

### Excitement

Jumbo Khumalo, the event director, expressed his excitement about this new chapter. "We are thrilled to announce the rebranding of the Jumbo Festival to Eswatini Lifestyle Awards. This exciting new chapter reflects our commitment to celebrating the best of Eswatini's praiseworthy personalities across all fraternal of lifestyle like business, leadership, corporate, culture, fashion and creativity."

Since its inception, the Jumbo Festival has been a vibrant platform showcasing Eswatini's rich talent and innovation. It has provided a stage for both emerging and established figures to be recognised for their contributions to the country's dynamic lifestyle landscape. Over time, the organisers identified the need to place greater emphasis on the awards aspect to better honour excellence and inspire continued growth and achievement within the community.

"The Jumbo Festival has been a staple of Eswatini's lifestyle scene, showcasing talented individuals across various categories. As we continue to grow and evolve, we have recognised the need to intensify the awards part of the concept henceforth the resolution to have the word 'awards' in the event name," Khumalo explained.



# HEALTH AND BEAUTY

## Beyond Awareness:

### THE CLINIC GROUP URGES EARLY BREAST CANCER SCREENING

theclinicgroup  
integrated healthcare

As the world turns pink this October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, The Clinic Group is reminding us that awareness is only the first step. The true power lies in early detection, in getting screened before symptoms appear.

At the forefront of this movement is Dr. John Kunene, a respected physician and advocate for preventive health. His philosophy mirrors The Clinic Group's bold mission: to provide exceptional and innovative healthcare solutions. Which in other words can mean bringing First World healthcare to everyone who needs it. "A simple checkup can save your life," he says. "We often wait until something feels wrong, but by then, we've lost time. Prevention must come first."

He recalls a recent case of a middle-aged man who came in with blurred vision. Routine screening revealed high sugar levels, an early warning sign of diabetes. With timely care, his condition was brought under control. "That is what early detection does," Dr. Kunene says. "It gives people a chance to live longer and healthier."

#### From Awareness to Action



▲ For The Clinic Group, achieving First World healthcare is not just about having the latest technology, it is about putting people first.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month serves as a reminder that screening saves lives, not only from cancer, but from countless other preventable diseases. The Clinic Group encourages everyone, regardless of age or gender, to make screening a regular part of life, not a reaction to illness.

"Health is not something we check only when we are unwell," Dr. Kunene explains. "It is something we should track throughout our lives, from childhood right through adulthood. That is how we build a culture of prevention."

Through its integrated model, The Clinic Group connects general medicine, women's wellness, dietetics, mental health, and chronic disease management, ensuring patients receive care that is comprehensive, continuous, and compassionate.

#### Technology with a Human Heart

For The Clinic Group, achieving First World healthcare is not just about having the latest technology, it is about putting people first.

"Technology helps us detect problems faster, but it is our connection with patients that truly heals," says Dr. Kunene.

The Group's multidisciplinary teams work together across departments, ensuring that each patient's care plan is tailored, coordi-



nated, and effective. Every diagnosis, discussion, and decision reflects the organisation's core values, Accountability, Agility, Commitment, Teamwork, and Embracing Change all aimed at improving patient outcomes and strengthening trust.

#### Preparedness as a Way of Life

The Covid-19 pandemic underscored the importance of proactive healthcare. "If we had focused more on prevention, early warning systems, and education, the impact could have been far less severe," Dr. Kunene reflects.

It is a lesson The Clinic Group has taken to heart. Today, its teams continue to promote accessible screening programs, health education, and integrated care, empowering communities to take control of their health before problems escalate.

#### Leading Change, Saving Lives

Guided by its vision being Africa's Leading Integrated Business Partner, The Clinic Group is transforming how people experience care, uniting expertise, innovation, and empathy. The clinic group mission is clear: to provide exceptional and innovative healthcare solutions, which includes being able to bring First World healthcare to everyone who needs it, without barriers of geography, privilege, or access.

"Our goal is not only to treat illness," Dr. Kunene concludes. "It is to keep people healthy. Screening is where that journey begins."

This Breast Cancer Awareness Month, The Clinic Group invites everyone to take that vital first step, get screened, stay informed, and take charge of your health. Because awareness saves lives, but action saves even more.



▲ The Clinic Group invites everyone to take that vital first step, get screened, stay informed, and take charge of your health.

OCTOBER IS;  
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

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A Nap a Day?

NAPPING isn't just for babies. Studies show that an afternoon nap is great for adults, too.

There's no need to feel lazy for indulging in daytime sleep. A short nap in the mid-afternoon can boost memory, improve job performance, lift your mood, make you more alert, and ease stress. Cozy up to these nap benefits.

It Can Improve Your Memory

Studies have shown that sleep plays an important role in storing memories. A nap can help you remember things learned earlier in the day as much as a full night's sleep. Napping works to keep you from forgetting things like motor skills, sense perception, and verbal recall, too.

You May Be Able to Connect the Dots Easier

Not only can napping help you remember things you've just learned, but it could help your brain draw connections between things you find out. In one study, nappers found it easier to put together information they got earlier in the day.

It Might Help You Climb the Corporate Ladder

When you do a task over and over throughout the day, your performance gets worse as the day goes on. Studies show that a nap can help keep you more consistent.

It May Lift Your Mood

If you're feeling down, try taking a nap to lift your spirits. Napping, or even just resting for an hour without falling asleep, can brighten your outlook. Experts say relaxation that comes from lying down and resting is a mood booster, whether you fall asleep or not.

Need to Be More Alert? Nap

If you start to feel a bit sleepy right after lunch, you're not alone. The post-lunch struggle is real. A 20-minute nap can help you battle heavy eyelids.

Small Naps Bring Big Benefits

A nap as short as 10 minutes can be beneficial, but keep your nap to 30 minutes or less so you don't wake up feeling more tired. That grogginess you can feel after a nap is called sleep inertia. The longer you nap, the more likely you are to have that feeling. The worse it is, the more time you'll need to wake up and transition back to work.

Naps are Better Than Caffeine

If you're feeling tired but have work or studying to get done, you may be better off taking a nap than sipping a coffee. Compared to caffeine, napping can bring better memory and learning.

Long Night Ahead? A Nap Can Help

If you know you won't get much sleep for a night or two (due to travel, for example) you're better off preparing with a nap ahead of time than powering through with

caffeine. The longer the nap, the better. If you have to resort to caffeine, drinking small amounts often is better than one large cup of joe.

They Can Ease Stress

If you're under a lot of pressure, a nap can release stress and improve your immune health. Experts believe that a 30-minute nap can do the trick.

They're Good for Your Heart

A nap can even help your ticker. A study found that people who napped for 45 to 60 minutes had lower blood pressure after going through mental stress. So a nap can help your body recover from pressure-filled situations.

They Can Make You More Creative

Ever wake up with a great idea? REM sleep, which typically starts 70 to 90 minutes after you fall asleep, activates parts of your brain associated with imagery and

dreaming. A nap with REM sleep can help you combine ideas in new ways to come up with answers.

Naps Can Help You Sleep Better at Night

Although it may seem illogical, taking a nap during the day can help older adults improve sleep at night. Studies show a 30-minute nap between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. combined with moderate exercise, like a walk and stretching in the evening, helps improve nighttime sleep. Mental and physical health can get better, as well.

They Can Help Your Little Ones, Too

Many preschool-age children stop napping long before they enter kindergarten. Fact is, naps are critical for learning and development at that age. Children who nap regularly are better able to recall things they learned. Since short-term memory stores are limited at that age, younger kids need more frequent sleep. It's

an important part of how the brain hangs on to memories.

Make Them a Habit

While certain benefits of napping can be had by anyone, there's some evidence that naps only improve certain types of learning when the person takes them regularly. This includes the ability to tell the difference between similar things like images or textures.

When Should You Nap?

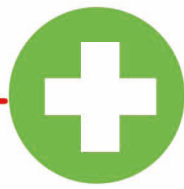
To get the most benefits out of a nap, you need to time it right. Most people will find an afternoon snooze to be the most natural and helpful. Some say sleep is better between 2 and 3 p.m., when humans naturally have a dip in alertness. The time that works best for you will depend on how rested you are to begin with.

If you're well-rested, a slightly later nap is better. If you're behind on sleep, you'll want to nap earlier.

WebMD







#### 1. Go darker with your greens.

**NOTHING** beats calcium for your bones. Sure, you can get it from dairy, but it's also found in lots of vegetables.

Why not do both? One great choice: dark leafy greens such as bok choy, Chinese cabbage, kale, collard greens, and turnip greens. One cup of cooked turnip greens has about 200 milligrams of calcium (20% of your daily goal). On top of that, dark greens also have vitamin K, which can reduce your risk for osteoporosis.

#### 2. This spud's for you.

Two lesser known nutrients that help keep bones healthy are magnesium and potassium. If you're low on magnesium, you can have problems with your vitamin D balance, which may affect your bone health. Potassium neutralizes acid in your body that can leach calcium out of your bones. One delicious way to get some of both of those nutrients is by eating a baked medium-size sweet potato with no salt, which has 31 milligrams of magnesium and 542 milligrams of potassium.

#### 3. Start your day off tart.

Add a grapefruit to your breakfast and you'll be doing more than waking up your taste buds. Citrus fruits have vitamin C, which has been shown to help prevent bone loss. One whole pink or red grapefruit has about 88 milligrams of vitamin C, giving you the amount you need for the entire day. Can't handle the sourness of a grapefruit? A navel orange comes in close with 83 milligrams.

#### 4. Get figgy with it.

If you're looking for bone-strengthening fruits, figs should be near the top of your shopping list. Five medium fresh figs have around 90 milligrams of calcium and other skeleton-saving nutrients like potassium and magnesium.

Fresh figs are grown in California through the summer and fall, but you can find them dried all year. And dried ones are just as good: Half a cup of dried figs have 121 milligrams of calcium.

#### 5. Think beyond canned tuna.

Salmon and other types of fatty fish offer an array of bone-boosting nutrients. They contain vitamin D, which helps your body use calcium, and omega-3 fatty acids, which may also aid bones. One of the best ways to buy salmon is actually canned. Three ounces has 187 milligrams of calcium. Why such a high amount? Small, soft bones get included with the meat in the canning process (don't worry, you won't even notice them).

#### 6. A superior sandwich spread.

Made simply from ground up almonds (and maybe a little salt), almond butter is an easy way to boost your calcium intake. Two tablespoons has 111 milligrams of calcium. Plus, almonds contain potassium (240 milligrams in 2 tablespoons) as well as protein and other nutrients that play a supportive role in building strong bones.

#### 7. "Milks" from plants.

You'd think that by swapping out dairy



# Super foods for your bones



milk for the kind made from soybeans, almonds, or coconuts, you'd lose all that calcium and vitamin D. But most of the varieties you'll find in the store have been given an extra boost of those nutrients. Check the label to be sure.

#### 8. Swap in some vegetarian proteins.

Tofu is a mainstay in Asian cooking, both for its versatility and the fact that it's a nutritional powerhouse. Half a cup of calcium-enriched tofu contains more than 860 milligrams of calcium. Tofu has other bone-building benefits, too. Research suggests that isoflavones, which are plentiful in tofu, may make soy useful

in warding off bone disease in women after menopause.

#### 9. Juice up a classic.

It may go perfectly with pancakes, but orange juice doesn't naturally contain much calcium. That said, it can still be a great way to increase your intake. How? Manufacturers often sell versions that have been fortified with calcium (look for it on the packaging). In fact, fortified orange juice has about the same amount of bone-building calcium as dairy milk.

#### 10. A dried fruit often ignored.

Hear the word "prune" and you probably

think of something older people eat to stay regular. But everyone should actually be snacking on dried plums (what is what prunes actually are!). Research has found that eating them every day, along with calcium and vitamin D, can help improve your bone density by slowing the breakdown of bone in your body.

#### 11. Select a smarter sweetener.

Unlike refined white sugar, molasses is a source of calcium. In just 1 tablespoon of the sweet syrup you'll get 41 milligrams of calcium. You can do more than bake with it. Try it instead of honey to top your yogurt or oatmeal or mix into a smoothie.

**WebMD**



# NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ A mourner climbs a pole outside the Parliament building where the body of Kenya’s former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who had been receiving treatment in India when he died, is expected to be kept for people to pay tribute, in Nairobi Kenya



▲ A federal agent chases a man in the parking lot of a Home Depot in Chicago.



▲ Onokatsu in action against Ichiyamamoto during the twelfth bout of the Grand Sumo Tournament at Royal Albert Hall in London



▲ A man greets a freed Palestinian prisoner released by Israel as part of a hostages-prisoners swap and a ceasefire deal, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.



▲ Erika Kirk, wife of slain conservative commentator Charlie Kirk, reacts next to U.S. President Donald Trump during a ceremony to posthumously award her late husband the Medal of Freedom, at the White House in Washington.t



▲ Law enforcement officers clash with demonstrators during a protest near the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Broadview facility in Chicago.





# Gallants leave it late against Chippa

IN what was one of the most exciting fixtures in the Betway Premiership this weekend, Marumo Gallants saw out a gritty 2-1 win over Chippa United at the Seisa Ramabodu Stadium on Sunday afternoon. Bienvenu Eva Nga thought he stole a point for Chippa in the 88th minute given his side's attempts to cancel out Sekela Sithole's opener at the hour-mark. Nevertheless, it was Eroine Agnikoi who had the last laugh with the winning goal in stoppage time.

Chippa United went on the attack from the first whistle with Giovanni Philander having a go at the Gallants keeper after a corner early on. The Chilli Boys made their intentions known inside the first 10 minutes

while Gallants looked to hit their opponents on the break.

Ndabayithethwa Ndondlo created his side's first scoring chance in the seventh minute by letting fly from outside the 18-yard-area after a swift counter-attacking move. With Ndondlo's attempt yielding no success, Chippa continued to pile on the pressure.

Gallants grew into the game as the 20th minute approached following attempts by Ndondlo and also, Mpho Chabatsane from range.

The hosts saw most of the ball toward the end of the half and kept Stanley Nwabili on his toes with numerous attempts at goal as they searched for an opener.

While the game ended 0-0 at the break, Philander remained Chippa's attacker-in-chief at the start of the

new half and came close to opening the scoresheet in the 47th minute through a shot inside the area that went inches over the bar.

However, it was Gallants who drew first blood in the 60th minute as Sithole's left footed shot from outside the box found the back of the net.

Gallants enjoyed most of the possession count in the second-half, however, Chippa did not hold back in their quest for a leveller leading up to the 75th minute mark.

The Chilli Boys' shocked Gallants with an equalizer two minutes from time as Eva Nga found himself in the right place at the right time to slot home a right-footed shot in the middle of the danger zone to set up an exciting end to the game.

(Supersport)

# Rovanpera win sets up sizzling world rally title battle

KALLE Rovanpera's win at the Central European Rally on Sunday deepened the three-way struggle for the world title as his Toyota team sealed a fifth successive manufacturers' title.

Rovanpera's teammate Elfyn Evans finished second to take the overall championship lead.

With two races remaining, in Japan and Saudi Arabia next month, the Welshman now leads the championship standings on 247 points, 13 ahead of Rovanpera and another Toyota driver Sebastien Ogier.

Veteran Frenchman Ogier, who is gunning for a ninth world title, damaged his chances when he hit a tree on Saturday but he salvaged 10 points

for his thumping win in the Super Sunday stage and the Power Stage.

Racing on tarmac in Germany, Austria and Czech Republic, this was Rovanpera's third win of the year, following triumphs in the Canary Islands and Finland, but he saved his praise for the Toyota team.

"Huge congratulations to everyone in the workshop, clearly, we are super good as a team," said two-time world champion who will leave the world of rallying at the end of the season to try a new venture, still with Toyota, in the Japanese Super Formula Championship.

The 25-year-old, however, made it clear he wants to go out with a bang.(Supersport)



▲ Kalle Rovanpera.

# Fleetwood wins in India to continue blistering form

RED-HOT Tommy Fleetwood shot a superb final round of seven-under 65 on Sunday to win the DP World India Championship by two strokes, continuing a blistering run of form.

Japan's Keita Nakajima began the day in the lead with a two-shot cushion at 17-under par, but his three-under 69 was not enough to hold off the charge of the Englishman who finished at 22-under par.

After tapping in for par at the last, the popular Fleetwood enjoyed a magical moment when his seven-year-old son Frankie charged across the green to hug his father to huge cheers from the packed galleries.

"So we were at home last week and we were playing golf together and (Frankie) just said randomly: 'Do you know what you've never done?'," explained Fleetwood.

"You've never won a tournament and I've been able to run on to the 18th green'.

"All day today, I had in my mind: 'Could I put myself in a position where I can actually make that moment happen?'.

"It's just one of those little things that means a lot to me. That was really cool. That's what I wanted to do all day."

Fleetwood took control with four birdies from the seventh at the devilishly tight Delhi Golf Club, but it was a crucial par putt at the 11th that kept his round going.

BIG PUTT

"That one on 11 – I hit a couple of poor iron shots there on 11 and 12 – but that putt was big and I managed to just keep it going through the back nine," said Fleetwood.

The 34-year-old put the title beyond doubt

with a brilliant 25-foot putt for an eighth birdie of the day at the 17th to end Nakajima's chances and the Japanese player had to settle for second.

The Englishman's win followed him lifting the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup order of merit in August.

He sealed that by finishing in the top four of the first two PGA Tour playoff events and then winning the season-ending Tour Championship for his maiden victory on the US-based circuit.

"There's plenty of times where things haven't gone my way," said Fleetwood.

"But the last two tournaments (where) I've been in contention I've won, so maybe things are starting to even out a little bit."

Fleetwood, the world No 5, was also the leading points scorer for the victorious European team at the Ryder Cup last month.

The inaugural \$4 million event in India attracted a host of Ryder Cup players and star names to the historic Lodhi course at Delhi Golf Club, a green lung in the heart of the city studded with the ruins of Mughal-era tombs.

Ireland's Shane Lowry had a final-round 68 to tie for third on 18-under par with England's Alex Fitzpatrick and South Africa's Thriston Lawrence.

Norway's Viktor Hovland finished with a flourish, sinking a chip for an eagle three at the 18th to get into a three-way tie for sixth at 17-under.

Rory McIlroy struggled to get going on Sunday and a 71 that left him on 11-under and a share of 26th place.



▲ Tommy Fleetwood.

New Zealand's Daniel Hillier briefly threatened an upset with seven birdies in his first 10 holes to take the early final-round lead.

But he was derailed by

a double-bogey seven at the 14th and slipped back to finish at 16-under par and a share of ninth place. (Supersport)



# Pirates suffer shock defeat in Champions League clash in DRC

ORLANDO Pirates' quest to reach the group stages of the CAF Champions League suffered a setback when they suffered a 3-0 defeat to DRC's Saint-Eloi Lupopo in the first leg of the second round at Stade Frederic Kibassa Maliba on Sunday.

The loss left the Buccaneers with a huge mountain to climb heading into the second leg in Orlando on Saturday.

Pirates coach Abdeslam Ouaddou made three changes to the team that started the Carling Knockout last-16 clash against Siwelele FC. Captain Nkosinathi Sibisi returned to the starting eleven in place of Lebone Seema, while Sipho Mbule was given a start in place of the injured Relebohile Mofokeng. Kamogelo Sebelele also returned to the starting line-up in place of Oswin Appollis.

Evidence Makgopa, who scored the third goal for Bafana Bafana during their 3-0 victory over Rwanda in a FIFA World Cup qualifier mid-week, was again given the nod up-front as a lone striker.

Wanet Kashala gave the home side the perfect start to the match when he put them in the lead in the fifth minute after the visitors failed to clear the danger.

The goal rattled the Buccaneers somehow and they resorted to defending deep and thereby allowing Lupopo to put pressure on them earlier on in the game.

Pirates were awarded a free kick in a promising position in the 15th minute, which was taken by Deon Hotto and the ball eventually landed on the feet of Makgopa who fired in a shot at goal, but his shot was saved by Lupopo goalkeeper Simon Medjo.

The Buccaneers slowly found their



▲ Abdeslam Ouaddou.

rhythm as the game progressed and they launched their own attacks, but the Lupopo defence stood strong.

With both sets of players seemingly affected by the simmering heat in Lubumbashi, the pace of the game slowed down and the referee called for the cooling break just after the half-hour mark.

Lupopo led Pirates 1-0 during the half-time break.

Ouaddou introduced Oswin Appollis and Thalente Mbatha for Sebelele and Masindi Nemptajela respectively at the start of the second half as he tried to change the complexion of the game.

However, much like the first half, it was the hosts who were quick off the mark in the second half, but Sip-

ho Chaine kept Pirates in the game by producing good saves.

Chaine, however, could not deny Lupopo their second goal and they found it through Dramane Kambou in the 70th minute.

Pirates tried to find the away goal and they thought they got it in the 86th minute through Deon Hotto, but the goal was disallowed for a foul.

Three minutes later, Jean Benoît Tukumbane put the game beyond Pirates' reach when he netted the third goal for Lupopo.

(The Citizen)

## Harry Maguire heads late winner as Red Devils claim first Anfield victory since 2016

Harry Maguire stunned Liverpool as his 84th-minute header clinched Manchester United's first win at Anfield since 2016 and condemned the hosts to a fourth consecutive defeat. Maguire guided in Bruno Fernandes's cross just six minutes after Cody Gakpo had cancelled out a controversial opening goal from Bryan Mbeumo only 61 seconds into a thrilling contest.

Mbeumo beat Giorgi Mamardashvili from Amad Diallo's pass to leave Anfield shellshocked but Liverpool were furious play wasn't stopped for a head injury to Alexis Mac Allister, who went down in the build-up after colliding with Virgil van Dijk.

Mac Allister needed treatment and had to play on wearing protective headgear but VAR could not intervene as there was no foul. Guidance from the Premier League Match Centre suggested referee Michael Oliver did not stop play as he did not see the injury.

The dramatic opening set the tone for a pulsating game with Manchester United initially resisting Liverpool's efforts to equalise with the help of some luck. Gakpo struck the post three times before finally hauling the hosts level when he tucked home substitute Federico Chiesa's low cross.

The out-of-form Mohamed Salah had also missed two gilt-edged chances but it felt like Liverpool were primed to find a winner before Maguire struck to spark more jubilant celebrations from Manchester United, who might have had a second goal in the first half had Fernandes not fired wide from a big chance.

Liverpool tried to rally again in the closing stages but Gakpo missed a glorious opportunity, heading wide from Jeremie Frimpong's cross when it looked easier to score, leaving them to face up to a fourth consecutive loss for the first time since 2014, having also been beaten by Chelsea, Galatasaray and Crystal Palace. (Reuters)



▲ Harry Maguire.

## Sundowns cruise past Remo Stars in CAF Champions League opener

Mamelodi Sundowns opened their 2025/26 CAF Champions League campaign with a commanding 5-1 victory over Nigeria's Remo Stars at the M.K.O. Abiola International Stadium on Sunday.

Tashreeq Matthews, Peter Shalulile, Miguel Reisinho, Arthur Sales and Katlego Ntsabeleng were all on target for the Brazilians, while Samson Olasupo netted a late consolation for the hosts, who were outplayed in the first leg preliminary second round match.

Sundowns went into the break with a comfortable 2-0 lead after a composed and clinical first-half display. The visitors started on the front foot, eager for an early breakthrough, but were met with aggressive defending from the Nigerian side.

The opening exchanges were fiercely contested, with Stars refusing to allow Sundowns time or space to find their rhythm. Nuno Santos forced a save from goalkeeper Serge Obassa in the 10th minute with a low drive, before Matthews broke the deadlock two minutes later. The winger produced a moment of individual brilliance, shrugging off his marker and firing a powerful left-footed shot into the bottom corner.

Despite taking the lead, Sundowns momentarily eased off under the humid Abuja conditions, allowing the hosts to gain some

control. After a scheduled water break in the 26th minute, the South African champions reasserted their dominance.

Miguel Reisinho nearly doubled the advantage with a firm header that forced Obassa into a sharp save following Marcelo Allende's pinpoint free-kick. Three minutes before half-time, Shalulile made it 2-0, holding off his marker before calmly slotting past the advancing Obassa to give Sundowns a healthy cushion at the interval.

Khuliso Mudau embarked on one of his trademark runs down the right before cutting the ball across for Reisinho, who tapped home just after the hour mark. It was a moment of redemption for the Portuguese midfielder, who was sent off in the Carling Knockout clash against Marumo Gallants before the FIFA break.

Stars showed some fight late on, with Olasupo rattling the crossbar in the 73rd minute. Minutes later, Sales extended Sundowns' lead to 4-0 with a composed finish after being played through on goal. Olasupo eventually got his reward after wrong-footing Ronwen Williams to score what proved to be a mere consolation.

Substitute Ntsabeleng closed off the scoring late in the match as he scored his first goal in Sundowns colours after joining on loan from FC Dallas.

The two sides will meet again next Sun-



▲ Ronwen Williams of Mamelodi Sundowns celebrates goal by teammate.

day, with the aggregate winner advancing to the group stages of Africa's premier club

competition. (The Citizen)





▲ Lobamba National High school in jovial mood.



▲ Mjingo High school celebrating their success in the CAF school tournament.

# Mjingo, Lobamba National High crowned CAF African Schools Football Champions

Stories by Chris Dlamini

IT is not every day that a local school gets a Confederation of African Football (CAF) title. That is why it was such a special moment of joy for the winning schools as crowned on Friday by the Eswatini Football Association (EFA). This was during a prize presentation event held at the EFA Technical Centre in Lobamba. Two schools were declared champions of the two divisions, the boys' and girls' under-15s. These are Mjingo High (ladies) and Lobamba National (boys). Both schools turned out to be the best in the CAF African Schools Football Championship 2025 which was played in a league format since March at the EFA Technical Centre. Mjingo beat 13 other schools to

the title, with St. Mary's High taking the second spot. The champions won 11 and drew two, finishing with 35 points, while their runners-up finished with 29 points, six short of the champions after suffering two defeats. For their achievement, the Mjingo ladies took home 10 soccer balls, a trophy and gold medals. St. Mary's received seven soccer balls and silver medals while third-placed Hillside High got five soccer balls and the silver medals. Otherwise, every school took home something as each was handed three soccer balls. In the boys' section, Lobamba National was presented with 10 soccer balls as well as their trophy and gold medals after beating 17 other schools to the title. Lobamba finished with 44 points, level with the runners-up Elangeni Primary. However, a better goal difference of five goals did the trick for Lobamba. Just like the ladies, it was sev-



▲ St Marys high school were runner up.

en soccer balls and silver medals for the runners-up and five soccer balls and bronze medals for third-place finishers Hillside High. Hon-

ouring the pupils were EFA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frederick Mngomezulu, Member of Parliament (MP) Sifiso Shabalala who is

also in the Sports Portfolio Committee, and EFA Technical Director (TD) Boy 'Bizzah' Mkhonta as well as teachers.

## ...It was all teamwork – Mjingo's Sengetile ...I scored 11 goals – Lobamba National star

"IT was not easy but teamwork saw us through." The captain of the Mjingo High School ladies under-15 soccer team Sengetile Mavuso has attributed their success to teamwork. Soon after wearing her gold medal and lifting the champions' trophy with her teammates, she told the local media that winning the championship title was not easy but fun. "It feels fun, good and exciting to be crowned champions. As captain, I had a double task which was to play and also consistently encourage my team to keep fighting. I'm glad that we are now champions after our teamwork," she said. Mavuso said she was also motivated and confident because she played this tournament last year and represented the country in Namibia. She was asked if she had made it this year into the first 100 players selected for this year's regional CAF African Schools Football Championship in Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa. "I believe my experience from last year won me the selection," she said.



▲ Mjingo high school under 15 captain Sengetile Mavuso during an interview.

Mavuso then dedicated their success to her school, her teammates and sports teachers. Meanwhile, out of the 100, only 40 will travel to Cape Town for the tournament scheduled for December 5-8.

A TRUE champion, and a leader. That is Lobamba National High School's CAF African Schools Football Championship champions captain, Bahle Dlamini. His school won the boys development league run by the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) and it is a Confederation of African Football (CAF) initiative to promote the boy child and girl child from the grassroots level. "I want to thank my school for allowing us to go out and play here. Am sure we have represented the school well and I'm proud of my team," Dlamini said. He was also asked how it was for him being the captain and if he scored any goals throughout their 17 games. "It was all good and enjoyable as we understood each other. As for goals, I single-handedly scored 11 and they were all free kicks," he said. Dlamini said his position was central defence but whenever they got set pieces in good places, he always stepped up to bend it in.



▲ Lobamba national High school captain Bahle Dlamini making remarks.

"It's in me. I can bend it and I've grown so confident I know I can score from them, as my numbers speak for me," he said. Dlamini's school ended the tournament with 62 goals for and only 12 scored against it.



# New marathon queen on the rise

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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THE Imbube Marathon has discovered a new queen of the road for the country.

This is none other than Nelisiwe Magongo, who was the best female Liswati in the 42km category on Saturday at Somhlolo National Stadium.

Magongo won herself E40 000 for her heroics on the day after returning from India, where she was studying.

The prizes include the E35 000 best Liswati and E5 000 Spar Voucher.

Magongo said she was happy to be part of the race.

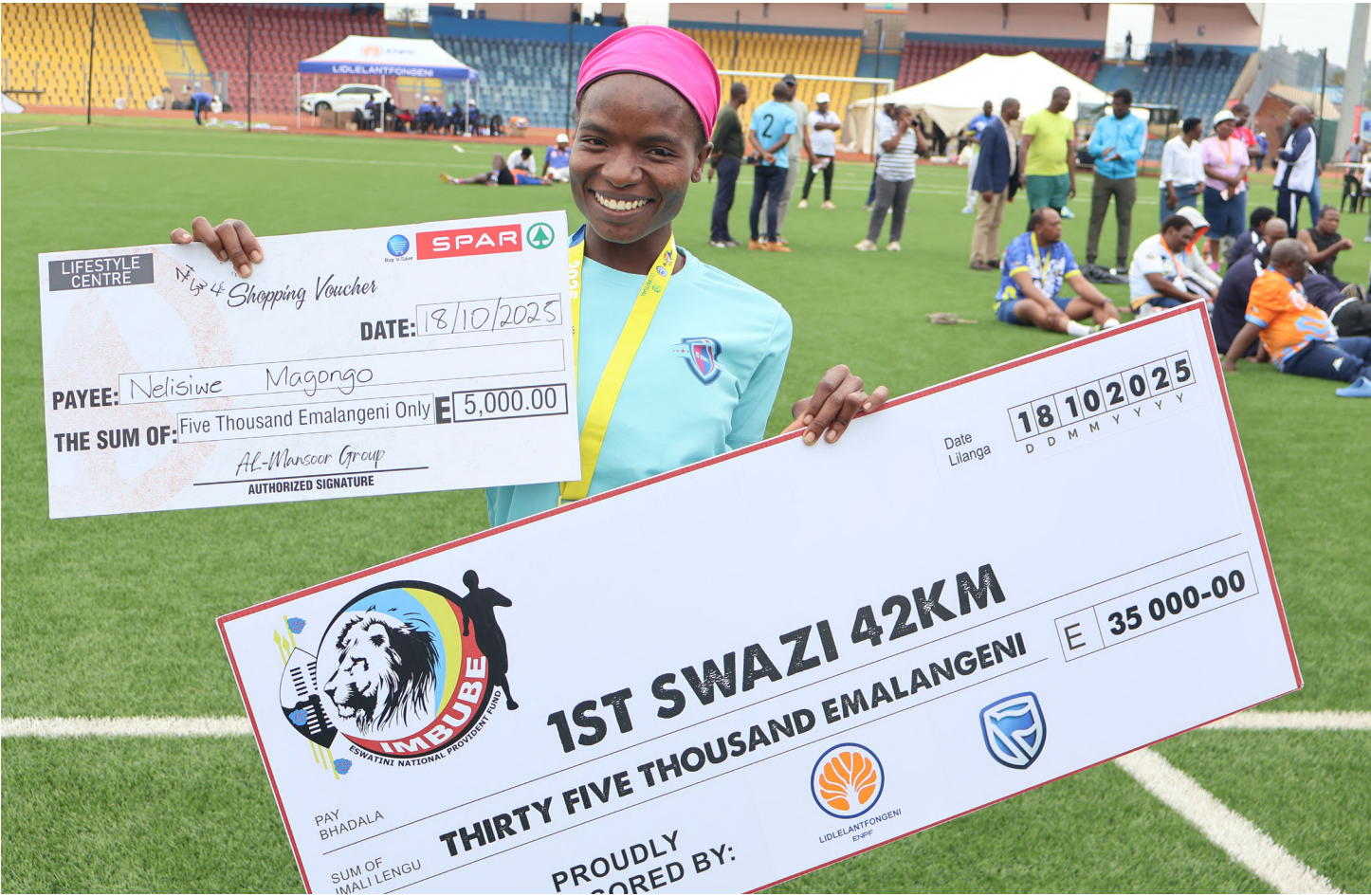
“I am pleased with my performance in the race despite the challenging route. I will continue working hard in my career, and it’s exciting to be back home to compete on home soil,” she said.

Magongo joined the likes of Mancoba Nhlabatsi (42km runner-up and best male Liswati) and the male duo of Ncamiso Hlatshwako and Mancoba Sangweni, who conquered the 21 and 10km respectively.

Hlatshwako is fresh from competing in the 2025 Region V marathon and further won the 5000m during the 2025 Confederation of Southern Africa Athletics regional championships held two months in Zimbabwe.

Female Correctional Service runner Thobile Ngwenyama clinched gold in the ladies’ section of the second biggest race.

Athletics Eswatini President Zakhele Dlamini congratulated the athletes for their



▲ Imbube Marathon female category best Liswati Nelisiwe Magongo displaying her prizes during the race.

achievements.

“We are happy with the performance of our athletes in the race. This shows that we are on the right track as a country in terms of conquering international competitions,” he said.

Dlamini also commended Mancoba Nhlabatsi for his gallant performances on the day.

Nhlabatsi failed to defend his title after finishing second behind new champion Charles Tjiane from South Africa.

“We are proud of Mancoba for his resili-

ence in the rave and we urge him to continue working hard in his career,”he said.

Nhlabatsi took home E55 000 which include E35 000(Best male Liswati), E15 000 second prize money) and E5 000 Spar Voucher

By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

NOT done and dusted. Former local marathon queen Samkelisiwe Thwala has resurfaced in the Imbube Marathon.

The Royal Eswatini Police Service athletics club road runner competed in the 10km category of the prestigious marathon held on Saturday at Somhlolo National Stadium.

Thwala said the race helped her rediscover her form.

“I am slowly recovering from the knee injury, which kept me out of action for a while. I won’t put myself under pressure in terms of returning to competitive races. Overall, the race was exciting with its challenging route,” he said.

Several local clubs, such as TZD, Slojoes, Golden Foot, Zithande, Ngculwini, Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force, Royal Eswatini Police Service, and Correctional Services, among others, attended the prestigious marathon funded by E1million by various companies.

Standard Bank was the main sponsor with E350 000.

Other sponsors include Old Mutual, Ubombo Sugar, Spar, Mandla Mahewu, and IDCE, among others.

## The results

### 42km

- |                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 1. Charles Tjiane     | 02:33:04 |
| 2. Mancooba Nhlabatsi | 02:33:09 |
| 3. Ntokozo Nkonyane   | 02:33:35 |
| 4. Lungelo Nxumalo    | 02:35:15 |

### 10km

- |                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| 5. Nkululeko Gama   | 02:37:18 |
| 6. Fikinkosi Zondo  | 02:37:43 |
| 7. Peter Muthubi    | 02:38:49 |
| 8. Itumeleng Phala  | 02:39:59 |
| 9. Thulane Magagula | 02:40:32 |

### 21km

- |                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| 10. Sifiso Ngoobo          | 02:43:41 |
| 11. Mancooba Sihlongonyane | 02:44:27 |
| 12. Mancooba Tsela         | 02:44:59 |

### Females

- |                        |          |
|------------------------|----------|
| 1. Rosina Kiliboino    | 03:15:13 |
| 2. Nomvula Sithole     | 03:17:57 |
| 3. Msawenkosi Nsibande | 03:38:54 |

### 21km

- |                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| 1. Noamiso Hlatshwako     | 01:08:06 |
| 2. Mohau Rasogo           | 00:36:21 |
| 3. Sipho Mamba            | 00:36:09 |
| 4. Sipho Mndzebele        | 00:37:00 |
| 5. Kgaugelo Rasogo        | 00:37:09 |
| 6. Bongani i Jele         | 00:37:17 |
| 7. Melusi Khumalo         | 00:37:16 |
| 8. Ntuthuko Maseko        | 00:38:23 |
| 9. Simphiwe Dlamini       | 01:14:54 |
| 10. Nkosingiphile Dlamini | 00:39:55 |

### Females

- |                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| 1. Thobile Ngwenyama    | 01:32:58 |
| 2. Nongcebo F Mathabela | 01:36:23 |
| 3. Nokukhanya Memela    | 01:39:00 |

### 10km

- |                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 1. Manqoba Sangweni   | 00:31:07 |
| 2. Samuel Mathabatha  | 00:31:53 |
| 3. Prince Ndlovu      | 00:32:50 |
| 4. Sozabile Malinga   | 00:33:53 |
| 5. Musawenkosi Mamba  | 00:34:39 |
| 6. Thamsanqa Hunguana | 00:35:20 |
| 7. Bukhosi Dlamini    | 00:36:37 |
| 8. Mmeleli Mkhonta    | 00:37:08 |
| 9. Sayitsheni Shongwe | 00:37:19 |
| 10. Sithando Shongwe  | 00:37:23 |

### Females

- |                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 1. Seluleko Ndzinisa  | 00:43:34 |
| 2. Siphosethu Gamedze | 00:43:38 |

## Former female star resurfaces in 10km



▲ REPS Athletics Club female runner Samkelisiwe Thwala after competing in the 10km.



TANZANIA’S RED LIONS IN CRUCIAL AWAY WIN:

# Simba SC devours Nsingizini

By Chris Dlamini

Nsingizini Hotspurs..... 0, Simba SC..... 3, (At Somhlolo National Stadium, Lobamba)

A tougher second leg awaits Nsingizini Hotspurs who will travel to Tanzania hoping for a miracle.

After losing 3-0 at home on Sunday to the feared and respected Simba SC from Tanzania, a deserved win after they created several scoring opportunities, Insingizi Yezulu has a mammoth task away in Tanzania on Saturday. The group stage dream was heavily hampered with the 3-0 home defeat. However, there is still another 90 minutes for Nsingizini to fight back and earn the slightly over E12 million group stage bounty from the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

Insingizi, as Nsingizini is also fondly known, conceded in the only added minute before half-time. Breaking the deadlock was Simba SC’s Wilson Nangu who rose above all to nod home from the corner spot. The goal handed Simba a deserved lead before second-half substitute Kibu Denis Prosper made it 2-0 with under 10 minutes left of regulation time.

Just when many thought it was going to end 2-nil, Khanyakwezwe Shabalala was beaten in a one-on-one situation by Kibu, who sealed his brace with a well-taken edge-of-the-box curled ball into the far bottom corner. This was enough and they got the first-leg win - 3-0 it finished.

Eswatini nearly celebrated inside the opening 30 but Thubelihle Mavuso saw his volley go inches over from a Kwakhe Thwala low cross. The local side also won a few corner kicks but none could be turned into a goal. The coach, Mandla Qhogi then rested striker Joel Madondo for Dorfiah Nunadoe and Adeleke Ade for Mvuselelo Mthethwa.

Simba had already been forced to take off Abdala Selemani Mwalimu for Jonathan



▲ Simba SC fans ecstatic after the final whistle. The wallopped Nsingizini Hotspurs 3-0 at Somhlolo National Stadium.

Sowah during the break due to an injury. He suffered it after a rough tackle by Kwakhe Thwala, and it is from this foul that they won the corner to score.

Meanwhile, Nsingizini must brace for a crowd they have never had before when they meet Simba at home. The Red Lions, as they are fondly known, have a huge fan base and that was evident at Somhlolo National Stadium in the first leg fixture as their supporters nearly packed the main stand on the right side of the country’s soccer Mecca.

### Miraculous

If anything, Nsingizini now need to win 4-0 or 4-1 to reach the group stage on a 4-3 or 4-4 aggregate. A 4-4 aggregate score favours Nsingizini to advance on the away-goal rule.

If they win 3-0, that opens the game for them as a penalty shootout will decide who advances. Otherwise, it will be almost miraculous against Simba SC at home. The

Tanzanian side is fresh from last season’s TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup finals but got the runners-up spot.

### TEAMS:

► **Ns. Hotspurs** - Khanyakwezwe Shabalala, Neliswa ‘Tiger’ Dlamini, Adeleke Ade (Mvuselelo Mthethwa), Joel Madondo (Dorfiah Nunadoe), Thubelihle Mavuso, Kwakhe Thwala (Sambulo ‘Masoso’ Simelane, Sizwe ‘Yeki’ Khumalo, Kingsley Kwakyi, Vuyo Mncina, Nkosingiphile Shongwe, Ayanda Gadlela (Quality Dlamini).

► **Simba SC** - Yakoub Suleiman Ali, Anthony Mligo, Joshua Mutale, Jean Charles Ahoua, Shomari Salum Kapombe, Steven Mukwala, Rushine De Reuok, Naby Camara, Wilson Nangu (Yusuphu Ally Kagoma), Neo Maema, Abdala Selemani Mwalimu (Jonathan Sowa).



▲ Royal Leopard FC coach Edwin Matsebula.

## CAF CONFED CUP: We performed beyond expectations – R. Leopard coach

By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

ROYAL Leopards head coach Edwin Matsebula is proud of his players following their gallant display against Union Maniema in the CAF Confederation Cup.

The former National Under 17 mentor said following their 1-1 draw against the DR Congo side on Saturday in Kinshasa.

“I am proud of the players for their bravery in this crucial assignment. We showed character by coming from behind to level matters in the second half,” he said.

Matsebula said they won’t be complacent during the return leg scheduled for this coming Saturday at Somhlolo National Stadium.

### Complacency

“We need to avoid complacency during the second leg and be vigilant defensively as the opposition has got good players,” he said

The local envoy’s crucial away goal was scored by striker Thembisa Shabangu.

The police side will now need a goalless draw during the return leg to advance to the second round of the continent’s second premier competition.

The blue and white ensemble last reached the group stages of the same competition in 2022.



▲ Mbabane Highlanders’ Andile Mpisane.

# Highlanders to win league – Andile Mpisane

By Chris Dlamini

AFTER making his much-anticipated debut, Mbabane Highlanders Chairman and attacking midfielder Andile Mpisane has made a bold declaration.

This was on Saturday at Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini where his Highlanders, soon to be officially called Highlanders AM, pending an ongoing court case and the Eswatini Football Association (EFA) name-change, beat Manzini Sea Birds 2-0.

“I’m glad to play with the team. I believe we can and will win the league this season. We will also win our next match, he said.

Mpisane said he had the knack of saying things and they just happen.

“We are going to the league. Watch and see. Everything I usually say happens,” he declared. Worth noting is that Mpisane trained with his team all week in readiness for the Sea Birds game. He missed the MTN Premier League opener against defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs two weeks ago. Highlanders lost it 1-0. Mpisane and his mother, Shauwn ‘MaMkhize’ Mkhize



▲ Mbabane Highlanders players.

took over the now black and gold outfit in July this year from interim director Bheki ‘Rubber’ Simelane. However, Simelane had a fallout with thd team’s Patrons. The latter and their legal director, Chief Ally Kgomongwe passed the team’s leadership onto MaMkhize.

The flamboyant former Royal AM owner assumed the status of club President and

introduced a few changes like the colours from black and white to black and gold. She also added her son Andile Mpisane’s initials AM to the team’s name, which reads Mbabane Highlanders AM FC now. However, the name-change did not go ahead as there is still an ongoing court case involving the club and Simelane.





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CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PRELIMS



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A E12 million battle:

# Simba SC devours Nsingizini

... Home advantage not utilised by Nsingizini Hotspurs who had their own promising moments amid Simba SC's dominance. **Page 23**