

# Eswatini Daily News

Friday  
24 October, 2025



**Eswatini earns first mainland Africa Bonsucro Certification**

▲ Eswatini has become the first country in Africa to receive the Bonsucro certification, a global standard for responsible sugar production. (More on Page 2)

## SACU pay-out in, Govt says every cent spent

● The sum received was approximately E2.65 billion

By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has confirmed receiving the anticipated Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenue payment. Through the Ministry of Finance, the Government said the funds have already been allocated towards settling supplier invoices, financing capital projects, and meeting pension obligations.

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Army recruitment exercise:

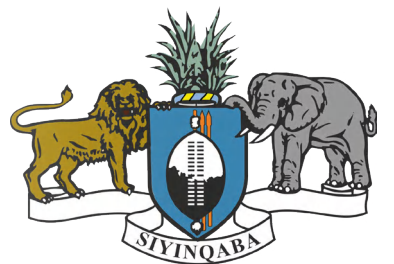
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By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has confirmed receiving the anticipated Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenue payment.

Through the Ministry of Finance, the Government said the funds have already been allocated towards settling supplier invoices, financing capital projects, and meeting pension obligations.

In an interview, the Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg, said the sum received was approximately E2.65 billion, rather than exactly that figure, and that the funds were already expended.

“The funding has landed and we have already spent all of it. We repaid the Central Bank for the advance, PSPF for the pension deductions, some capital projects, and some suppliers,” explained the Minister.

When pressed on whether the figure was precisely E2.65 billion, he said, it was approximately, and the names of the suppliers the Minister revealed they prioritised

“We paid the suppliers that had waited the longest,” said the Minister.

Worth noting is that, SACU is the customs union comprising Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa.

Its revenue-sharing arrangement places duties collected at union external borders into a Common Revenue Pool (CRP), which is then distributed among members based on a formula.

For Eswatini, SACU receipts have historically formed a significant portion of total government revenue. According to an IMF report, SACU receipts accounted for an estimated 13.6 % of GDP in 2023, and remain a major fiscal pillar.

Earlier research noted that the kingdom was particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in SACU transfers.

Meanwhile independent reporting

# SACU pay-out in, Govt says every cent spent



▲ Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg.

supports that the government had cleared verified supplier invoices submitted to Treasury by 2 July 2025.

### Invoices

Nevertheless, other supplier groups say that many invoices remain outstanding. A letter by health-sector suppliers to the ministry of health stated that more than E100 million in claims remain unpaid despite the public assurances.

A national supplier organisation, Business Eswatini, confirmed that invoices verified and submitted by the July cut-off date appear to have been paid.

However, many smaller contractors insist that they still await payment and cite delays in line-ministries forwarding invoices as the main obstruction.

One supplier told the press that having to wait months for payment has forced firms

to absorb interest costs, delay wages, or face closure.

Economists highlight that while high SACU transfers provide short-term relief for Eswatini’s budget, reliance on them leaves the country exposed to external shocks.

“While public debt remained moderate at 39.2 % of GDP in FY24/25, Eswatini faces higher borrowing costs than neighbouring countries. Directors emphasised the importance of fiscal discipline given volatile SACU revenues,” reads an article from IMF.

Economist Mkhosi Thwala has warned of the direct impact of government non-payment on businesses and public service delivery. “If a supplier who cooks for patients at a government hospital or the police service has not been paid the service delivery will be poor and government will be left to deal with angry patients and an agitated police service,” he said.

Business Eswatini Chief Executive Officer E Nathi Dlamini said while the SACU inflows had eased pressure on the Treasury, delayed payments remained a serious concern for many members.

“We appreciate the progress, but full clearance of arrears is critical to restoring confidence in government procurement,” he said. A Mbabane-based contractor who supplies medical equipment said months-long payment delays had nearly forced him to close his business.

“We had to take out loans just to pay salaries. Getting paid now gives us breathing space, but it’s come too late for some,” said the supplier.

# Eswatini earns first mainland Africa Bonsucro Certification

By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has become the first mainland African country to be awarded the Bonsucro certification.

This is an international standard that recognises sustainable and responsible sugar production. The certification covers the Tambankulu Estate (the grower), Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation’s Simunye mill (the miller), and Eswatini Sugar (the marketer).

The landmark event took place on Thursday at Simunye club, the joint accreditation marks a new chapter for the local sugar industry, positioning Eswatini among the global leaders in ethical and sustainable sugarcane farming.

Worth mentioning is that, Bonsucro certification is a global standard for proving the sustainability of sugarcane production and its derivatives.

It is a multi-stakeholder program that requires companies to comply with strict standards, be assessed by third-party auditors, and verify their environmental and social responsibility, including fair labour practices and the protection of ecosystems.

There are two main types of certification: the Production Standard for farmers and millers, and the Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard for the trading side of the supply chain. Eswatini Sugar Chief Executive Officer, Banele Nyamane, said the certification would allow the country’s sugar producers to compete at a higher level.



▲ Eswatini has become the first country in Africa to receive the Bonsucro certification, a global standard for responsible sugar production.

“This new accreditation will allow us to sell top-notch sugar that meets the highest global standards. It also opens the door to premium markets and could generate multi-million-emalangen returns for the industry,” he said.

### Sustainability

He further mentioned that Bonsucro is a global sustainability platform for the sugarcane industry. Its certification system measures environmental, social, and economic performance across sugarcane farms and mills. It promotes responsible farming, fair labour practices, efficient water

and energy use, and improved productivity.

“Under the Bonsucro Production Standard (Version 5.2), mills and growers are required to show measurable progress in reducing their environmental impact, improving working conditions, and ensuring traceability from field to final product,” said Nyamane.

### Standards

According to the CEO meeting these standards, Eswatini’s sugar producers now join a select group of certified players worldwide whose products are recognised as responsibly and sustainably produced.

The Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation’s Simunye mill is the first in the country to be certified, with sugarcane supplied by the Tambankulu Estate. Eswatini Sugar, which markets the country’s sugar, played a coordinating role in aligning all stakeholders with the Bonsucro requirements.

“This achievement shows what collaboration can. Growers, millers, and marketers worked side by side with a shared goal to make Eswatini’s sugar industry more competitive and sustainable,” he said.

The certification is expected to improve Eswatini’s access to global markets that increasingly demand sustainably sourced commodities. It also strengthens the country’s reputation among international buyers and investors who prioritise environmental and social responsibility.

Industry experts say Bonsucro-certified sugar often attracts better contract terms and improved buyer confidence. Certified mills and estates benefit from operational efficiencies, higher yields, and compliance with international trade and sustainability regulations.

For Eswatini, this milestone could unlock funding opportunities and long-term partnerships in global markets, ensuring growth that balances profitability with environmental stewardship.

Maintaining the certification will require ongoing audits and continued compliance with Bonsucro’s standards. Eswatini’s sugar industry players are expected to use this momentum to enhance production systems, safeguard labour standards, and meet sustainability targets.



SBY Kwanele Dhladhla

# Govt shifts salary review for security forces to Nov

GOVERNMENT has announced that the long-awaited salary review for the country's security forces will now be implemented in November 2025.

This follows delays linked to the ongoing remuneration alignment process and system constraints in the national payroll.

This was disclosed by Acting Government Spokesperson Thabile Mdluli, who said the decision was unavoidable due to overlapping financial adjustments and the need to finalise consultations on the salary review for the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF), Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), and His Majesty's Correctional Services (HMCS).

"Government wishes to update the nation on the unfortunate delay in the implementation of the salary review exercise for the country's uniformed forces. This regrettable development has been necessitated by several factors, among which is the implementation of the Phase II salary adjustment for uniformed forces in September 2025," Mdluli said.

She explained that the rollout of Phase II meant that comprehensive consultations on the new salary review outcomes could not be completed in time for the planned October implementation.

"Consultants have assured government that the salary review component for the uniformed forces is being finalised in consultation with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a satisfactory outcome. This process is expected to be completed on time to enable implementation by the normal pay dates in November 2025," Mdluli added.

The government also confirmed that the Treasury Department was unable to process the October salaries for the security forces alongside other public servants due to technical limitations in the payroll system.

Mdluli explained that the payroll system could only process salaries for all permanent employees simultaneously, which meant that the uniformed forces were automatically af-



▲ Correctional officers during a passout parade.

ected by the broader delay in October salaries for public servants.

"Government regrets this unforeseen development and acknowledges the inconvenience it has caused. Members of the uniformed forces are assured that His Majesty's Government values their contribution to national safety and security and remains committed to ensuring that their remuneration is reviewed reasonably, just like all other public servants," she said.

The announcement follows recent adjustments under the Phase II remuneration alignments, which were finalised after lengthy negotiations between government and the staff associations of REPS and HMCS.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Russell Dlamini confirmed implementation of the Phase II package, which benefitted both professional and functional ranks within the security services.

"The outcome of negotiations between government and the staff associations of the security forces has finally yielded positive results,"

said the PM when announcing the conclusion of talks.

Under the professional adjustment levels, officers holding the ranks of inspector/chief officer, assistant superintendent, and superintendent received a once-off, retrospective back-pay calculated at an 8 per cent net present value (NPV) rate for up to 24 months, costing government E57 million annually for 952 officers.

For the functional adjustment levels, which included assistant inspector/assistant chief officer, sergeant, warder instructor, constable, and wardress, a three per cent basic salary increment was implemented, also backdated for up to two years. This category covered 13,119 officers, costing the government E171 million annually.

Meanwhile, the government has also announced new pay dates for civil servants in October. According to a memorandum issued by Accountant General Nomsa Simelane on October 18, permanent employees would be

paid on October 27, while non-permanent employees were due to receive their salaries on October 31.

Simelane said the adjustment was necessary to allow for the proper input and testing of the new salary review scales.

"Government understands the importance of timely salary disbursement and appreciates the understanding and cooperation of all employees," she said, urging civil servants to plan ahead and ensure all stop orders and statutory deductions were adjusted accordingly to avoid penalties.

Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Public Service, Mthunzi Shabangu, confirmed that the delays were communicated to Public Sector Unions (PSUs) during ongoing discussions about the new pay structure.

Government recently committed to a 100 per cent implementation of the civil servants' salary adjustments recommended under Scenario No. 3 of the Salary Review Report, with effect from October 2025 payday and backdated to April 2025.

It was detailed that 15 per cent of the six months' back pay (April–September 2025) would be paid in October 2025, while the remaining 85 per cent would be disbursed in July 2026, the first month of the second quarter of the 2026/2027 financial year.

For employees in salary bands without an upward adjustment or whose grades were downgraded, he said government had approved a once-off five percent payment of their annual basic salary, to be paid in October 2025.

It was further announced that the revised housing and bus fare allowances would be implemented beginning October 2025, while the full housing allowance adjustments for salary Bands C–F and other consequential allowances would take effect in July 2026.

By Delisa Magagula

## E775 million paid out by SMVAF in 4 years

SINCEPHETELO Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (SMVAF) Chairman Zithulele Gina has revealed that the Fund has paid out over E775 million in claims over the past four years, underscoring the financial weight of road crashes on the organisation and the economy.

He said while the Fund continues to honour its mandate, the growing cost of care and rehabilitation calls for tougher enforcement of traffic laws and stiffer penalties for reckless drivers.

"Reckless behaviour on the roads leads to accidents that are incredibly costly not only in human terms but financially, directly impacting the resources of the Fund," Gina said.

In addition, he said, prevention is the most sustainable form of care, and that begins with making traffic fines a true deterrent.

Addressing more than 100 delegates from Eswatini, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia, Gina said stricter fines and stronger law enforcement are essential to curb fatalities and reduce claims that burden the Fund.

"We must strengthen law enforcement and ensure traffic fines reflect the seriousness of the offence," he added.

The Chairman noted that while Eswatini's compensation structure has served its purpose, it must evolve with the times to

ensure fair support for victims.

Currently, payouts include E10,000 for funeral expenses, E350,000 for loss of earnings, E350,000 for loss of support, and E150,000 for general damages (pain and suffering).

Meanwhile, Minister for Finance Neal Rijkenberg praised the Fund's shift from a compensation-only model to one focused on integrated, patient-centred care.

He said this approach ensures that financial compensation goes hand-in-hand with physical rehabilitation, mental health support, and long-term reintegration.

"Tougher fines are not just about punishment they're about protecting lives and preserving public resources," the Minister said.

The Fund's new Case Management Model, unveiled at the conference, seeks to:

- Coordinate care across medical providers and disciplines

- Support rehabilitation and mental health
- Digitise claims and patient records for transparency and efficiency.

Acting Chief Executive Officer Sam Mzileni described the conference as a reaffirmation of regional unity in building responsive systems of care.

"This is more than a professional convening it's a shared mission to restore lives and uphold dignity," he said.

Mzileni said collaboration among SADC member states was essential in addressing



▲ The Sincephetelo Motor Vehicle Accident Fund building.

common challenges.

"The rotational nature of this conference shows our shared commitment to continuous improvement," he said.

Conference speaker Dr Thando Ncube highlighted a critical challenge in accident recovery legal delays in compensation. He said lengthy litigation often stalls

rehabilitation, leaving survivors frustrated and financially strained.

"The disconnect between legal timelines and physical recovery can delay healing and impact well-being. We need a more patient-centred legal process that ensures survivors get the care and compensation they need, when they need it," he added.



Stories By Thokozani Mazibuko

UNDER the blistering Somntongo sun, 24-year-old Mfanfikile Gumbi sprinted past dozens of hopefuls, his worn-out shoes pounding the dusty ground as if chasing destiny itself. What made his victory sweeter wasn't just the finish line it was the journey that led him there.

Mfanfikile, a humble cattle herder from the rolling hills of Somntongo, has spent most of his days watching over livestock, dreaming of wearing a uniform that represents more than survival one that symbolizes purpose. After dropping out of Qomintaba High School in Form 2 back in 2021 due to financial challenges, life pushed him toward the fields. But even as he tended cattle, his spirit remained unbroken. "I've been training since 2023," he said, his voice carrying both exhaustion and pride. "Every morning, I would run before going to the cattle post. I knew that one day, this would matter."

And matter it did. During the army recruitment fitness race at Somntongo Inkhundla, Mfanfikile outpaced everyone, his determination cutting through the



▲Luyanda Msibi, the lady winner.

## HUSTLE AND HEART: From snacks stall to finish line

SHE may have dropped out of school in Form IV, but life never managed to drop her spirit. Siphosethu Shabangu (21) from Kwaluseni Umphakatsi proved that dreams are not reserved for those with perfect beginnings when she blazed past the competition to become the first female finisher at the Matsanjeni South Army Recruitment Race on Thursday morning. Shabangu, who sells snacks to pupils at Zamokuhle Primary School to support her grandmother, father, and two sisters, said her victory was a product of grit, prayer, and hard work. "I wake up early every day to prepare my stock for the school children, but today I woke up to run for my future," she said, still catching her breath after crossing the finish line. "I wanted to make my grandmother proud because she's the one who always tells me to keep going, no matter how tough life gets."

**A fighter's spirit**

Despite leaving school early due to financial struggles, Shabangu has remained determined to build a better life. Selling sweets, biscuits, and chips outside the primary school has been her family's main source of income but her dreams stretch far beyond the snack

scorching heat like a blade through grass. For him, the victory was more than a win it was proof that dreams born in the dust can still shine bright. "I didn't have fancy running shoes or training equipment," he added with a shy smile. "But I had faith, and I told myself I must make this count."

Following closely behind was 23-year-old Banele Masilela, who finished second in the men's category. A recent graduate from Florence Christian Academy, Banele is currently unemployed and lives with his mother. For him, this opportunity represents hope a chance to rewrite his story. "I'm proud of how I performed today," Banele said, catching his breath. "Things have been tough at home, and I'm praying this will open doors for me and my family."

On the women's side, 20-year-old Luyanda



▲Banele Masilela came second in the men's category.

stall. "My grandmother is my hero. She always says: 'We may be poor, but we are not weak.' That's what kept me running today," Shabangu shared with a smile, her voice filled with gratitude. Spectators at the event were moved by her determination, with many cheering as she sprinted across the finish line with her head held high.

**Hope for the next chapter**

Army officials supervising the race praised participants for their discipline and endurance, noting that young people like Shabangu are living examples of resilience in the face of hardship. Her achievement also shines a light on many young EmaSwati who, despite economic hardships, continue to fight for opportunities to serve their country and uplift their families. "Winning today means everything," she said. "It shows that even if you start small, your heart can take you far."

With her eyes now set on the next recruitment phase, Siphosethu Shabangu stands as a symbol of courage, proving that hustle and heart can outshine any obstacle life puts in the way.

## FOCUS ON ARMY RECRUITMENT RACES

# From herding cattle to winning army recruitment

Msibi proved that resilience has no gender. After a week of intense training, she emerged the fastest among female competitors, earning her ticket to the next phase of the recruitment process. "I've been preparing every day, and I'm so happy it paid off," she said, grinning from ear to ear. "I want to make my family proud and serve my country."

For many young people in rural Eswatini, the army recruitment race is more than just a fitness test it's a lifeline. It's a chance to step out of poverty, to trade herding sticks and household chores for boots and discipline. As Mfanifikile caught his breath, the crowd cheered his name the herd boy who outran the odds. And for a brief, powerful moment, Somntongo wasn't just a place of dust and cattle it was a place where dreams took flight.



▲ Mfanufikile Gumbi who came first.



▲Friday Dlamini (25) from Swazi Slojos.



▲Ndumiso Kunene (27).

## Swazi Slojos athletes continue to shine in army recruitment races

THE Swazi Slojos Athletics Club continues to prove its dominance on the track, with yet another of its runners making waves in the ongoing army recruitment races. This time, it was Friday Dlamini (25) who came first while Ndumiso Kunene (27) who earned himself a runner-up finish while at the Matsanjeni South leg of the competition, further cementing the club's growing reputation as a breeding ground for endurance talent. Both Dlamini and Kunene who hails from Nhlangano, showcased exceptional stamina and discipline throughout the grueling race, finishing just seconds behind the overall winner. Their performance was no stroke of luck it was the result of relentless preparation, teamwork, and a commitment to the sport. Dlamini have been training consistently with my Swazi Slojos teammates," Kunene shared after the race. "We push each other every day early mornings, long runs, and hill sprints. It's all about discipline and believing that hard work will pay off. I'm happy that the effort finally showed today."

The army recruitment races, held across

various tinkhundla centres, have become a proving ground for aspiring soldiers and competitive runners alike. For many, they are more than just races they are opportunities to demonstrate endurance, determination, and the spirit of service. Swazi Slojos, known for grooming elite long-distance runners, has produced a string of top performers in recent recruitment events. Club members have consistently featured among the top finishers, showcasing not only athletic ability but also the club's role in shaping disciplined and goal-driven youth. Speaking on Kunene's achievement, a fellow Slojos coach praised the young runner's dedication: "Ndumiso represents what our club stands for consistency, teamwork, and heart. His result today motivates the rest of our athletes to aim even higher."

As the recruitment races move to their next destinations, all eyes will be on Swazi Slojos once again a club whose athletes continue to remind the nation that success is built on sweat, sacrifice, and the spirit of perseverance.



# MPs accused of flouting Party procedures

By Kwanele Dhladhla  
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**CONCERNS** have emerged within the corridors of Parliament over the growing trend of motions that directly call for the appointment of select committees.

The practice has been condemned by some legislators and parliamentary staff who pointed out that it undermines procedure and weakens accountability.

During a consultation session held at Happy Valley Hotel on Thursday, several MPs and the Principal Committee Clerk voiced displeasure with what they viewed as a procedural drift in how select committees were being established.

The workshop brought together members of the Climate Change Sessional Committee, the Gender and Development Sessional Committee, and the Environmental Affairs Portfolio Committee, along with stakeholders from the UNDP, SADC Parliamentary Forum, and the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

Parliament Principal Committee Clerk Mpendulo Ngcamphalala cautioned against duplication of roles among committees, calling for strengthened collaboration rather than competition.

“The joint committee will assist in avoiding duplication and work overlaps, which tend to impact negatively on efficiency. Stronger collaboration would also aid in ensuring joint community dialogues that can strengthen parliamentary outreach,” he said.

His remarks came as the discussions touched on the proliferation of select committees and the confusion surrounding their mandates and formation. Ngcamphalala noted that traditionally, select committees were established after a motion had been debated and a resolution reached, not as a predetermined clause within a motion itself.

“There is a trend we see in Parliament

## ... clerks also fear advising legislators to avoid being seen as difficult

now. Motions increasingly stipulate the appointment of select committees instead of allowing the debate to determine whether such a committee is necessary. This is procedurally questionable and should be corrected,” observed Deputy Speaker Madala Mhlanga.

The clerks also raised concerns about a breakdown in adherence to standing orders and parliamentary norms. Mhlanga lamented that a lot happening in the committees was unparliamentary. He warned that procedures had been strictly followed, none of the recent committee reports would have been adopted because there were no proper deliberations.

He said some chairpersons had reduced committee processes to mere formalities.

“The chairpersons just end up being given only one page to sign before tabling reports. Even the two hours we were allocated for debating ministerial reports was too little. The process is being rushed,” he said.

A tense relationship between committee clerks and MPs also came to light. Ngcamphalala revealed that clerks often feel intimidated or sidelined when offering procedural advice.

“Committee clerks are afraid to advise MPs because they might go against their instructions. When we advise, we are seen as difficult. Many clerks have been shut out by chairpersons and end up being bullied,” he said.

However, Lobamba MP Michael Masilela countered that some clerks overstep their advisory role.

“In some committees, clerks advise, but in others, they issue instructions, which should not happen. MPs must remain independent and make their own decisions, even as they take advice from clerks,” he argued.

Ngcamphalala responded that measures would be taken to train clerks on how to



▲ MPs have emphasised on the need for training on Parliament Standing Orders.

handle themselves more appropriately during committee sessions to maintain professionalism and balance.

The discussions also extended to climate financing, with LaMgabhi MP Sicelo Jele questioning Parliament’s role in climate budgeting and whether it relied solely on grants or government allocations.

Ngcamphalala clarified that Eswatini benefits from both climate change loans and grants, while the government also appropriates funds for related initiatives.

He further emphasised the need for a joint committee work plan between climate-related committees to streamline oversight and policymaking.

Meanwhile, Clerk to Parliament Benedict Xaba revealed that Eswatini envisages to establish an Institute of Parliamentary Studies,

which could serve as a regional hub for legislative capacity building.

“Eswatini has been a champion in HIV/AIDS governance, and we look forward to hosting the SADC Institute of Parliamentary Studies. We must showcase our story and continue being a champion in SRHR and HIV/AIDS governance commitments,” said Xaba.

However, as these ambitions grew, several voices within Parliament called for internal reforms first, starting with stricter adherence to procedure and clarity in the roles of select committees.

The growing sentiment among MPs and clerks alike was that the credibility of Parliament depends on strengthened governance, transparent committee work, and respect for institutional processes.

## Murder, baby theft suspect arrested

By Thokozeni Mazibuko

**IN** a spine-chilling turn of events, Matsapha Police have cracked what appeared at first to be a simple death into a gruesome murder and baby theft plot that has left the Logoba community reeling.

A 25-year-old woman from Mahhoshe, Ngudzeni, has been arrested and charged with the murder of a 26-year-old woman from Moti, KaPhunga, as well as contravening Section 77(1)(B) of the Children Protection and Welfare Act of 2012 taking a child without appropriate consent.

According to a statement issued by Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer (PICO) Nosipho Mnguni, the suspect’s arrest follows weeks of intensive investigation by the Matsapha Police, who uncovered shocking details of deceit, poisoning, and a desperate attempt to cover up the crime.

### False report and suspicious circumstances

It all began on October 5, 2025, when the suspect reported to police that she had



found her “friend” later confirmed as the victim lying dead on her bed inside her rented flat at Logoba, Ndzevane area.

Police initially treated the case as a sudden death and opened an inquiry file. However, inconsistencies in the suspect’s statement quickly raised suspicion.

Further investigation revealed that the name and home area of the deceased, as provided by the suspect, were false. Forensic tests later indicated that the victim had likely been poisoned, prompting investigators to reclassify the matter as a murder case.

The most disturbing discovery came shortly afterward. Upon establishing the true identity of the deceased, investigators

learned that she had left her home in Moti, KaPhunga, with her 18-month-old baby but when her body was found, the child was nowhere to be seen.

Police intensified their search and, days later, located the missing baby in the custody of the suspect’s mother. The infant has since been safely reunited with the maternal grandmother, bringing relief to the grieving family.

While the motive behind the killing remains under investigation, sources close to the case say police are exploring the possibility that the suspect lured the victim to Logoba under false pretences, allegedly with the intention of taking her baby.



▲ Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer Nosipho Mnguni.

The suspect is expected to appear in court today (Thursday) to face charges of murder and child abduction.

Deputy PICO Mnguni commended the swift action and thorough work of the investigating officers, emphasizing the importance of persistence in uncovering the truth.

“This case is a reminder that our detectives will continue to follow every lead until justice is served,” she said.

Residents of Logoba and Moti, KaPhunga, have expressed horror over the incident, describing the suspect as “quiet but cunning.” Many have urged women to remain cautious when visiting acquaintances or accepting invitations from people they do not fully trust.

As investigations continue, the nation watches closely, shocked by the chilling combination of murder, deceit, and the attempted theft of a child a case that has exposed the darkest corners of betrayal and desperation.



By Delisa Magagula

# Facebook helps Form 1 dropout chase Army dream

A 20-year-old army hopeful has captured the country's attention. Until a few weeks ago, Lindokuhle Zwane was just another young man trying to make ends meet in one of Eswatini's poorest rural areas.

Today, he is being celebrated as the first male recruit to qualify for the next phase of the army recruitment exercise after out-running hundreds of competitors during the Shiselweni II Inkhundla race.

He has captured the hearts of many, through social media platform facebook Zwane has received help from members of the public who are rooting for him to make it through the next stage of the army recruitment.

Zwane is the first of nine children. His father, once employed at Montigny, lost his job years ago, and his mother has never worked.

With no stable income, the family survives through subsistence farming and the kindness of neighbours.

"When my father stopped working, everything fell apart. We had to rely on what little we could plant. There were days when we had only one meal," Zwane said in an interview. The pressure of survival forced him to abandon school in Form 1.

"I wanted to stay in school, but there was no money for fees or uniforms. It was painful watching my friends go to class while I stayed behind. But I had to accept it," said Zwane.

At home, Zwane helped his father with fieldwork and often took small jobs to earn a few emalangenis for the household. Even so, he kept dreaming of a way out not for himself alone, but for the family that depended on him.

When the army announced the recruitment drive earlier this year, Zwane saw a glimmer of opportunity.

"I told myself this was my only chance. I didn't have fancy shoes or training clothes,

but I was ready to try," he explained.

On the morning of the Shiselweni II race, he joined a crowd of young men gathered under the rising sun. Some wore running gear, others ordinary sneakers. Zwane arrived in worn-out shoes and a faded T-shirt.

The course was demanding steep hills, rocky paths, and stretches of open road under the heat.

However, Zwane never slowed down. Step by step, he pulled ahead until the cheers grew louder and the finish line came into sight.

That moment marked a quiet victory for a young man who had almost given up hope.

A Facebook user who witnessed the event posted Zwane's story online, describing how the Form 1 dropout from Madulini had outrun everyone despite his difficult background.

Within hours, the post went viral. Messages poured in. People wanted to know who he was, where he lived, and how they could help.

For a family that had never imagined strangers would care, the response was overwhelming.

"People started sending help. They bought me a cell phone and gave me E3 000.

Some people sent words of encouragement. Others said they would pray for me. I never thought something like this could happen to me," Zwane said.

The support has given the family a much-needed boost. His father, visibly emotional when speaking about the attention, said the kindness of strangers has given them hope after years of hardship.

"Lindokuhle has always been determined. When I lost my job, I felt I had failed my



▲ 20-year-old army hopeful Lindokuhle Zwane.

children. But now I see that my son's hard work is opening doors for all of us," he said.

Neighbours say the story has lifted spirits across Madulini.

"Everyone here talks about him. He has shown that even if you come from a poor background, you can still do something that makes people notice you," said a neighbour to the family.

The young man's daily routine has changed little. He wakes before sunrise, runs along the gravel paths near his home, and helps with chores before resting in the afternoon.

He says the training keeps him focused as he waits for the next stage of recruitment.

"I'm not relaxing because I know what is coming. I want to be strong enough to make it through. My dream is to join the army, take care of my parents, and make sure my brothers and sisters finish school. I don't want them to stop where I stopped," he said.

Meanwhile, a labour analyst who spoke on condition of anonymity said Zwane's story reflects the struggles faced by many young people in Eswatini, where unemployment remains high.

"The army recruitment exercise has drawn thousands of applicants because it represents one of the few opportunities for stable employment," the analyst said.

"Many of these young men and women are not just chasing a career they are trying to escape poverty and support their families. Zwane's case is one of many that show how desperation for work has pushed youth to compete in large numbers for limited spaces," added the analyst.

Minister of Labour and Social Security Phila Buthelezi said Zwane's story highlights the reality faced by many young people in



▲ Minister of Labour and Social Security Phila Buthelezi.

Eswatini who continue to battle unemployment and limited opportunities.

"What we are seeing through the army recruitment exercise is a clear reflection of the levels of joblessness among our youth," he said.

Buthelezi further said thousands are turning up for the army because they see this as one of the few chances to secure a stable income and a better future.

"As government, we recognise this challenge and are working to create more sustainable employment pathways, especially for young people in rural areas," he said.

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BRIEFS

businesses adapting  
to tariffs

SOME of the world's biggest producers of food, consumer goods and cars delivered stronger-than-expected quarterly results on Thursday, easing investor concerns over the toll of U.S. President Donald Trump's import tariffs.

Ahead of the third-quarter earnings season, global companies had warned of more than \$35 billion in tariff-related costs as U.S. duties reach their highest since the 1930s.

Lab-grown gems losing  
sparkle

LAB-GROWN diamonds are losing their appeal due to oversupply and consumer preferences are starting to shift back to natural stones, World Diamond Council President Feriel Zerouki has said.

The natural diamond industry has seen a price slump since mid-2022 after peaking earlier that year, mainly due to the rising popularity of lab-grown gems especially among younger jewellery buyers.

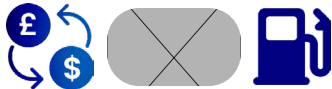
Clicks Group reports  
14% rise in profit

SOUTH Africa's biggest pharmacy chain, said on Thursday that its full-year profit grew 14.1%, supported by improved trading margins and robust sales.

The company's diluted headline earnings per share, a key measure of profit in South Africa, rose to 1,362 cents for the year that ended on August 31 from 1,193.5 cents a year earlier.

(Reuters)

| EswatiniBank           |              |         |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|
| FX RATES               |              |         |
| Notes/Cash             | Buy          | Sell    |
| U.S. Dollar            | 17.0500      | 17.5140 |
| G.B. Pound             | 22.6798      | 23.3471 |
| EURO                   | 19.7763      | 20.3862 |
| 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 embarks on journey to establish Cooperative Bank

Stories By Delisa Magagula

ESWATINI has taken a significant step toward strengthening its cooperative sector with the launch of the first roundtable engagement for the establishment of the Eswatini Cooperative Bank.

The initiative aims to create a financial institution owned and controlled by the nation's cooperative movement, providing a central hub for financial services, professional capacity building, and digital infrastructure.

The roundtable, hosted by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, brought together senior government officials, cooperative leaders, regulators, and international partners, including representatives from Germany's Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation (DGVR) and Moshi Cooperative University. The gathering marks what officials describe as a strategic milestone in the modern history of Eswatini's cooperative movement, which dates back to 1931.

Speaking at the event, Permanent Secretary Melusi Masuku highlighted the sector's enduring values of solidarity, self-help, and community progress.

"Our cooperatives have long provided accessible financial services to communities where commercial banks could not reach. The cooperative spirit has mobilised savings, extended credit, and built trust across generations," he said.

Masuku described the proposed cooperative bank as a central financial engine that will empower cooperatives to be more competitive and resilient in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

The institution is expected to provide liquidity support, wholesale banking services, and access to sophisticated financial instruments,



▲ Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade PS Melusi Masuku seated with the DGRV officials during the workshop.

including sustainable and development finance.

"This is not simply a financial initiative. It is an intentional strategy for empowerment, inclusion, and national development," Masuku said.

The Commissioner of Cooperative Development, Russell Nxumalo, confirmed that the initiative is at its inception stage.

"We are currently conducting stakeholder mapping and assessments and will be holding workshops with relevant stakeholders this month," Nxumalo said.

He emphasised that the bank's establishment would comply fully with national regulations and the oversight of the Central Bank of Eswatini.

Eswatini's cooperative movement is currently thriving, boasting over 1,430 registered cooperatives with collective assets exceeding E3.5 billion.

Savings and Credit Co-operative Societies (SACCOS) alone provide access to over E2.6 billion in savings solutions and have issued over E3 billion in loans, supporting education, housing, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion.

International partners are playing a pivotal role in shaping the project. DGVR the German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation

reiterated their commitment to sharing global best practices and expertise from Germany's cooperative banking systems, which encompass more than 700 local banks.

"Our role is to accompany, share, and adapt international best practices to Eswatini's unique context. The goal is a cooperative bank that is professionally managed, digitally enabled, and governed by the institutions it serves," said Fernando Espinosa during his presentation.

The government plans follow-up engagements with additional international partners in early November to further refine the strategic framework for the bank.

Officials emphasise that the success of the initiative will require collaboration across government, the cooperative sector, regulators, and development partners.

With the cooperative bank envisioned as a three-year project, stakeholders see it as a transformative step toward enhancing financial inclusion, supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and contributing to national economic development.

## Financial Cooperatives issue over E1.35bln in loans

FINANCIAL cooperatives in Eswatini have steadily increased their lending activity over the past eight years, with issued loans surpassing E1.35 billion in 2021.

This is according to a survey shared by Deputy Commissioner for Cooperative Development, Bongani Maziya.

The survey, which tracked lending activity from 2014 to 2021, shows a dramatic rise in issued loans, reflecting the growing role of cooperatives in supporting Swazi communities and businesses.

In 2014, financial cooperatives issued E609 million in loans. Lending activity accelerated significantly over the next few years, peaking in 2017 at E1.27 billion, marking a remarkable increase as cooperatives expanded their reach across the country.

However, 2018 saw a sharp dip in lending, with issued loans falling to E879 million, and remaining relatively steady in the following two years E878 million in 2019 and E845 million in 2020. The sector rebounded strongly in 2021, with issued loans surging to E1.35 billion, the



▲ Some of the Cooperative members who came to the roundtable.

highest level recorded in the eight-year period.

This growth underscores the crucial role of financial cooperatives in promoting access to credit, particularly for micro, small, and medium enterprises, as well as households across urban and rural areas.

Maziya emphasised that this lending activity reflects not only the financial capacity of cooperatives but also their commitment to fostering economic inclusion, entrepreneurship, and community development.

"Financial cooperatives continue to be a vital part of Eswatini's economic landscape, mobilising resources and providing loans that empower members to improve their livelihoods," he said.

With the cooperative sector thriving, the government and development partners remain committed to supporting initiatives that enhance the capacity, governance, and sustainability of these institutions, ensuring that their impact continues to grow in the years



# Woman Farmer of the Year crowned

By Delisa Magagula

The spirit of resilience, innovation, and excellence in Eswatini's agriculture sector shone brightly at Riders Range on Thursday.

The Woman Farmer Foundation hosted the 18th annual Woman Farmer of the Year Awards.

The event brought together hundreds of farmers, government officials, development partners, and well-wishers to celebrate the outstanding contributions of women and youth in agribusiness.

The Woman Farmer Foundation is a Non-Governmental Organization. It is a private, non-profit making organization. The Woman Farmer Foundation mandate is to improve women and youth's incomes and promote sustainable livelihoods through agriculture.

Seeing the importance of youth participation, the foundation has increased its focus on youth empowerment through agribusiness, with targeted beneficiaries in the rural areas. In 2017, the Female Youth Farmer of the Year category was added to the competition.

Meanwhile, this year's top honour went to Eli Olivia Dlamini, who was named the 2025 Woman Farmer of the Year, while Boniswa Malaza walked away with the Youth Farmer of the Year title.

Dlamini walked away with an E163 840 cheque and other gifts. Malaza walked away with E57 405 richer. In total over E500 000 was spent on prizes.

Both women expressed deep gratitude for the recognition, describing their wins as a reflection of years of hard work, passion, and perseverance in an industry often dominated by men.

The 18th edition of the competition marked yet another milestone for the Woman Farmer Foundation, which has been instrumental in empowering women and youth to take up farming as a business and a means of sustainable livelihood.

The competition has over the years grown in scale and impact, attracting participants from every corner of the country.

Sonia Paiva the Director and Founder said the initiative continues to be a key driver in promoting food security and advancing the economic empowerment of women and young people in Eswatini.

"We have seen remarkable progress since we started this journey 18 years ago. The women and youth who participate in this competition are transforming their communities through innovation, creativity, and determination," she said.

This year, a total of 247 farmers participated in the competition, representing the country's four ecological regions Highveld, Middleveld, Lowveld, and Lubombo Plateau.

The Manzini Region recorded the highest number of participants, reaffirming its position as one of Eswatini's most vibrant agricultural hubs.

The competition was divided into two categories Youth and Adult ensuring that both emerging and established farmers are recognised.

From the large pool of entrants, the top 15 from each category advanced to a second and more rigorous judging phase. After detailed evaluations and site visits, the top 10 finalists in each category were selected for the final round.

Meanwhile the judging panel comprised experts from key agricultural institutions,

including NAMBoard, the National Maize Corporation, World Vision, the Dairy Board, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Woman Farmer Foundation itself.

Representing the Minister for Agriculture Mandla Tshawuka, the Minister for Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs Bongani Nzima commended the partnership between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Woman Farmer Foundation.

He said the competition continues to play a critical role in promoting agricultural excellence and supporting national development goals.

Nzima congratulated all participants, particularly the winners, for their commitment to advancing the country's agricultural sector.

"The dedication of our farmers, especially women and youth, is a source of inspiration. They are not only contributing to national food security but also creating employment and business opportunities in their communities," he said.

He noted that the Foundation's continued collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture demonstrates a shared commitment to recognising and supporting farmers who are making a difference in their respective fields. He added that the introduction of new categories this year speaks to the growth and evolution of the competition, reflecting the changing face of agriculture in Eswatini.

"This initiative has become a national platform for celebrating excellence and innovation. It has helped us identify and support farmers who are embracing modern farming techniques, climate-smart practices, and agribusiness entrepreneurship," Nzima said.

Former Deputy Prime Minister and current Shiselweni Regional Administrator Themba Masuku also graced the event.

He encouraged more women and youth to take advantage of such opportunities, saying agriculture remains one of the most powerful tools for transforming rural livelihoods.

"Agriculture is not just about producing food; it is about building resilience and creating wealth for our families and our nation. The Woman Farmer Foundation has shown that with the right support, women and youth can thrive in this sector," Masuku said.

The competition's success stories continue to inspire more people to join the agricultural movement. Over the years, past winners have expanded their operations, diversified into new ventures, and created employment opportunities for others. Some have also become mentors, training young farmers and sharing best practices.

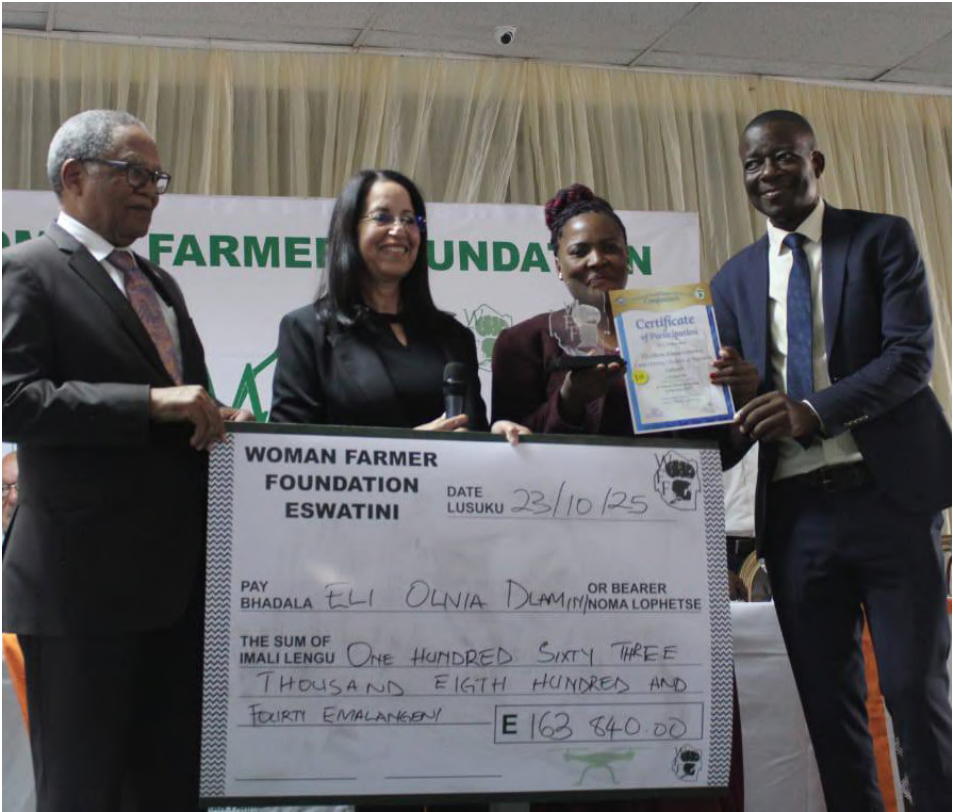
This year's winners, Dlamini and Malaza, were visibly emotional as they received their awards. Both expressed gratitude to the Foundation, their families, and their communities for the encouragement and support they have received throughout their journeys.

"I am deeply honoured by this recognition. Farming has not been an easy journey, but with determination and faith, I have learned that success is possible. This award motivates me to keep going and to help other women believe that they too can succeed in agriculture," she said.

Malaza, the Youth Farmer of the Year, echoed similar sentiments, saying the recognition would inspire her to expand her farming business and empower more young people to take up farming.

"Agriculture is the future, and we as young people must take the lead. This award shows that hard work pays off," she said.

Music, cultural performances, and an atmosphere of celebration, the 18th annual Woman Farmer of the Year Awards ended on a high note.



▲ This year's top honour went to Eli Olivia Dlamini, who was named the 2025 Woman Farmer of the Year.



▲ Boniswa Maziya receiving her cheque from Founder Sonia Paiva, RA Themba Masuku and Acting Agric Minister Bongani Nzima during the prize awarding ceremony.



▲ Shiselweni RA Themba Masuku, Acting Minister of Agriculture Bongani Nzima, Woman Farmer Foundation Founder Sonia Pavia seated during the ceremony.



## Quarterly earnings reveal businesses adapting to tariffs

SOME of the world's biggest producers of food, consumer goods and cars delivered stronger-than-expected quarterly results on Thursday, easing investor concerns over the toll of U.S. President Donald Trump's import tariffs.

Ahead of the third-quarter earnings season, global companies had warned of more than \$35 billion in tariff-related costs as U.S. duties reach their highest since the 1930s. They're also contending with disrupted supply chains, weaker consumer confidence and higher input costs.

As Trump continues to wield trade policy as a negotiating tool, executives still face regular threats of further tariffs and worries that tariffs will lead to higher inflation and hurt household budgets.

On Thursday, the busiest day for results so far this earnings season, some results suggested businesses are finding ways to pass on higher costs to customers or cut them - helping fuel stock market rallies.

Take Sweden's Volvo Cars the company's third-quarter earnings smashed analysts' expectations, sending its shares up as much as 40%, as a sweeping cost-cutting programme launched by CEO Hakan Samuelsson began to pay off. The company is among the European carmakers most exposed to Trump's tariffs as most of its U.S.-bound cars are exported from Europe.

"What we're now seeing is really, wow okay, this is delivering faster than we thought and faster than we planned," Samuelsson said of the cost reductions.

Gross profit margin rose to 24.4% from the previous quarter's 17.7%. To further counter tariffs, it plans to move production of some hybrid models to America in the coming years. Britain's Unilever another multi-national with a new CEO at the helm, also reported quarterly sales growth that topped expectations, driven by demand for beauty products across North America despite cautious consumer sentiment.

Like its peers, the maker of Dove soap and Hellmann's mayonnaise has been streamlining operations to reduce costs and CEO Fernando Fernandez is focusing on premium products to lift margins.

Earlier this week, German sportswear giant Adidas raised its full year operating profit guidance, saying it had managed to mitigate some extra costs from higher U.S. tariffs. Hasbro on Thursday raised its full-year forecasts, betting on holiday season sales and demand for its digital gaming segment, even as macroeconomic uncertainties cast a gloom on spending among American shoppers. (Reuters)



▲ U.S. President Donald Trump.

## World Diamond Council head says lab-grown gems losing sparkle

LAB-GROWN diamonds are losing their appeal due to oversupply and consumer preferences are starting to shift back to natural stones, World Diamond Council President Ferial Zerouki has said.

The natural diamond industry has seen a price slump since mid-2022 after peaking earlier that year, mainly due to the rising popularity of lab-grown gems especially among younger jewellery buyers.

But a collapse in lab-grown diamond prices on the back of increased production in China and India, has started to undermine confidence in the synthetic gems, Zerouki told Reuters in an interview at a mining conference in Luanda on Wednesday.

"If you look at the latest trends, lab-grown diamond prices are crashing. This is impacting consumer confidence in lab-growns," Zerouki said.

Diamond industry analyst Edahn Golan says the average wholesale price of one-carat and two-carat lab-grown diamonds has fallen by as much as 96% since 2018.

### Accessories

Experts have warned that the price of lab-grown diamonds could drop so low that they become fashion accessories that no longer compete with diamonds, especially in the key bridal market.

"I believe that the lab-grown bubble has burst. And actually, there is a movement in the trade, even at retail level, to come back to natural diamonds," she added.

Zerouki, who is also Vice President of Trading and Industry at global diamond gi-



▲ The natural diamond industry has seen a price slump since mid-2022 after peaking earlier that year, mainly due to the rising popularity of lab-grown gems especially among younger jewellery buyers.

ant De Beers, said a rebound in demand for natural stones would not happen by itself, but requires initiatives such as the Luanda Accord.

That is an agreement by diamond-producing countries and firms to create a collective marketing fund for natural diamonds.

Under the agreement, countries such as Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia and South Africa have committed to allocate 1% of their annual diamond sales revenue to a campaign to promote natural diamonds.

(Reuters)



▲ A Clicks outlet.

## South Africa's Clicks Group reports 14% rise in annual profit

SOUTH Africa's biggest pharmacy chain, said on Thursday that its full-year profit grew 14.1%, supported by improved trading margins and robust sales.

The company's diluted headline earnings per share, a key measure of profit in South Africa, rose to 1,362 cents for the year that ended on August 31 from 1,193.5 cents a year earlier.

In a statement, the company said the results demonstrated the resilience of its

business model as consumer sentiment and discretionary spending remained under pressure.

"(We are) well positioned in this environment due to our competitive advantage in the defensive health and beauty sectors where we hold market-leading shares in core retail categories as well as in pharmaceutical wholesale and distribution," said the statement.

Group turnover increased 5.3% to 47.8 billion rand (\$2.76 billion) for the year.

Retail turnover, which includes Clicks, The Body Shop and Sorbet corporate stores, increased by 6%.

A 10.7% growth in sales of private-label and exclusive brands was recorded and contributed 9.7 billion rand towards turnover.

The group, which has 990 stores and is aiming for 1,200 over the medium-term, declared a final dividend of 648 cents, up from 556 cents in 2024.

(Reuters)



By EDN Reporter

# Eswatini Mobile Launches iPhone 17 Giveaway to Drive Digital Inclusion

With the aim to promote digital inclusion and encourage customers to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Eswatini Mobile has launched an exciting 'Win an iPhone 17 Pro Max' competition that gives customers a chance to walk away with the

latest Apple smartphone.

The competition is one of many initiatives by the telecommunications company aimed at empowering customers to stay connected in an increasingly digital and AI-driven world.

Eswatini Mobile Head of Commercial Nosipho Xaba said the campaign represents more than just a giveaway; it reflects the company's commitment to technological progress and customer empowerment.

"We are living in an era where technology continues to shape how we communicate, learn, and do business," Xaba said. "At Eswatini Mobile, we believe every



liSwati should have equal access

to the tools and innovations driving the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This competition is one of the many ways we are encouraging our customers to stay connected, embrace AI, and experience the power of digital transformation."

To qualify for the draw, customers simply need to load E100 airtime or more. Each E100 recharge equals one entry into the draw, and multiple recharges mean multiple chances to win. Three lucky winners will walk away with a brand-new iPhone 17 Pro Max from this competition's draw, which will be held on November 28, 2025.

Terms & Conditions:

- Open to both Prepaid and Postpaid customers.
- Only valid recharges during the promotion period qualify.
- Participants must be 18 years and above.
- The SIM card used must be fully registered on VELA with correct documents.
- Winners will be announced via Eswatini Mobile's official platforms (social media, or SMS).
- Prizes are non-transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash.
- Winners must present valid identification and proof of SIM card ownership.
- If a winner cannot be reached or fails to claim the prize by December 3, 2025, a redraw will take place the following week.

Xaba further highlighted that Eswatini Mobile remains dedicated to empowering customers with innovative solutions that make life easier, faster, and more connected.

"Digital inclusion is not just

about connectivity; it's about enabling people to participate meaningfully in the digital economy. Whether it's through AI integration, digital services, or rewards like this one, we are constantly working to make technology accessible and beneficial to all our customers," she added.

The "Win an iPhone 17" competition is part of Eswatini Mobile's broader strategy to inspire innovation, reward customer loyalty, and promote a digitally empowered nation. For more information, customers are encouraged to visit Eswatini Mobile's official pages or dial \*222# to recharge and enter the draw.

About the iPhone 17 Pro Max

The iPhone 17 boasts cutting-edge AI capabilities, next-generation processing power, and an enhanced camera system, perfectly aligning with Eswatini Mobile's mission to keep its customers at the forefront of global technology.

It is Apple's latest flagship smartphone, designed for users who demand top-tier performance, photography, and battery life. It combines a large, vivid display with powerful internals all wrapped in a refined aluminum unibody design.

- The camera capabilities (three 48MP cams, advanced zoom) make it a top choice for creators, professionals, and users who value high-end imaging.
- The battery life and charging enhancements, alongside the new cooling and networking chips ensure it performs strongly under heavy use, which is important in a connected, digital-first world.

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Christmas  
came early this year

## Win an iphone 17 Pro Max!

Load E100 or more to  
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Top up E100 or more between  
the **24th of October** and **27th  
November 2025** and stand a  
chance to win **1 of 3** of the newly  
released **iPhone 17 Pro Max!**

Open to both Prepaid and  
Postpaid customers.

The draw will be on the **28th of  
November 2025.**  
Ts & Cs Apply.

Terms and Conditions Apply.

For more information dial 980 or visit any Eswatini Mobile Experience Centre.

www.eswatinimobile.co.sz



A deal to forge Europe’s answer to Elon Musk’s Starlink was reached on Thursday as the continent’s top space firms agreed to combine their satellite manufacturing and services businesses. Marking the most ambitious tie-up of European aerospace assets since the creation of missiles maker MBDA in 2001, Airbus (AIR.PA), opens new tab and Thales (TCFP.PA), opens new tab of France and Italy’s Leonardo (LDOF.MI), opens new tab will create a Toulouse-based venture to begin operations in 2027.

French Finance Minister Roland Lescure said the preliminary deal would “strengthen European sovereignty in a context of intense global competition”.

Italy’s Industry Minister Adolfo Urso said it supported the growth of European champions to compete globally.

VENTURE FACES GLOBAL COMPETITION

Code-named “Project Bromo”, talks between the three groups started last year.

Europe’s top satellite makers have long competed to build complex spacecraft in geostationary orbit but have been hit by the arrival of cheap, tiny satellites in low Earth orbit, notably the Starlink network built by Musk’s SpaceX.

Thales CFO Pascal Bouchiat, announcing quarterly sales that

included an initial contract for IRIS<sup>2</sup>, Europe’s planned secure satellite network, hailed the new venture but warned on the competition ahead.

“This first development contract for IRIS<sup>2</sup> doesn’t take away the challenges that the European industry, in particular, is facing,” he told reporters.

The new combination will employ 25,000 people with revenue of 6.5 billion euros (\$7.58 billion), based on 2024 figures.

It is expected to generate “mid-triple digit” millions of euros of synergies starting after five years, the companies said.

Nexperia’s China unit resumes chip sales to domestic distributors

DUTCH chipmaker Nexperia’s Chinese unit has resumed supplying semiconductors to local distributors, according to two people briefed on the matter, having previously halted all shipments when Beijing banned exports following an ownership dispute.

But as part of the resumption, which is confined to domestic trade, all sales to distributors must now be settled in Chinese yuan, the people said, whereas transactions had previously only used foreign currencies such as the U.S. dollar.

The Chinese unit also instructed distributors to transact with their customers only in yuan, in an apparent bid to stabilise supply in China and operate more independently from its Dutch parent, one of the people said.

Nexperia, now under Dutch government control, produces large volumes of chips in the Netherlands widely used in the automotive industry and consumer electronics. The majority are packaged in China and sold mostly to distributors.

Nexperia is now seeking alternative packaging partners outside China as the dispute with its Chinese subsidiary shows little sign of a quick resolution, the people said.

Nexperia has also warned customers in China that it does not guarantee the quality of products sourced from its Chinese subsidiary, the second person said.

They spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. The temporary sales halt and the resumption with settlements in yuan had not been reported previously.

A Nexperia spokesperson declined to



Europe takes aim at Musk’s Starlink with new satellite champion

Shares in Leonardo rose almost 2% while Airbus and Thales were up less than 1% in afternoon trading.

“The initiative is certainly positive, as it creates a European leader capable of competing globally and improves the profitability of a business ... that has struggled in recent years,” analysts at Italian investment bank Equita said in a note.

Shareholders now face up to two years of talks with governments, unions and the European Commission over the deal, which has implications for activities in Britain and Germany as well as Italy and France.

Italian unions requested more information and said the deal should help the country’s sector compete internationally.

Airbus and Thales have cut a combined 3,000 jobs following space losses. The three

new partners made no mention of further cuts, but executives said the focus would now turn towards potential growth.

BALANCING PAYMENTS

The deal will combine activities of Thales Alenia Space and Telespazio - two joint ventures between Leonardo and Thales - as well as various Airbus space and digital businesses, the remaining space activities owned by Leonardo and Thales SESO.

Airbus will hold 35%, and Thales and Leonardo 32.5% each, the companies said.

Sources familiar with the deal said there would be balancing payments to reflect the value of the assets being contributed, with Airbus receiving some compensation, depending on how well the various activities are doing when the deal closes in 2027.

Previous attempts to combine have hit an-

ti-trust hurdles.

“We expect, and will be vigilant, that the synergies created from efficiencies benefit us as a key customer of the new company,” said French satellite operator Eutelsat (ETL.PA), opens new tab.

The deal could face objections from smaller German satellite maker OHB (OHBG.DE), opens new tab, which a French parliamentary committee has said could end up acquiring some of the newly combined assets.

OHB did not reply to a request for comment.

Agreement between the three companies - each of which has had periods of prickly relations in the past - was salvaged after sources familiar with the matter said the talks had hit obstacles over governance and valuation during the summer. (Reuters)



▲ An employee works with a wafer in a production line of Dutch semiconductor company Nexperia, in Hamburg, Germany.

comment on the actions of its Chinese unit and said its efforts to seek packaging partners outside China predated the dispute and were not part of a move away from its Chinese factory.

On quality, the spokesperson said it had to inform customers of potential risks, but it had stopped short of saying they should not buy from its Chinese unit.

Nexperia’s Chinese unit did not respond to a request for comment. After the Reuters story about it resuming sales was published

on Thursday, it issued a statement on its WeChat account that said it was operating independently and its “manufacturing and business activities are proceeding in an orderly manner”.

The unit also accused its Dutch parent of raising “groundless doubt” on product compliance and said it would pursue legal options.

DUTCH GOVERNMENT SEIZES CONTROL

The Dutch government took control of

Nexperia on September 30 and removed its Chinese CEO, Zhang Xuezheng, citing concerns its technology might be appropriated by Nexperia’s Chinese parent, Wingtech Technology (600745.SS), opens new tab.

Court filings showed that the seizure came after rising U.S. pressure on Nexperia after Wingtech was placed on a restricted export list, though Dutch authorities say governance shortcomings were the trigger.

On October 4, China’s commerce ministry blocked Nexperia from exporting chips from China.

Following the order, Nexperia’s Chinese unit suspended shipments from its main Dongguan factory to all distributors, the first person said.

The dispute has fuelled concerns about supply chain disruptions across the global auto industry. Nexperia is one of the largest makers globally of basic chips that are not technically sophisticated but are needed in large volumes.

On Thursday, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association said Japanese automobile component makers had been notified by a Dutch semiconductor manufacturer that it may not be able to guarantee chip deliveries, which could seriously impact global production.

The German economy ministry said on Wednesday it would have a call with automakers and suppliers to discuss developments related to Nexperia. On Tuesday, the Dutch economy minister said he had spoken with his Chinese counterpart but failed to reach a solution.

(Reuters)



# King Charles and Pope Leo pray together in a 500-year first

BRITAIN'S King Charles and Pope Leo prayed together in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel on Thursday, in the first joint worship including an English monarch and a Catholic pontiff since King Henry VIII broke away from Rome in 1534.

Latin chants and English prayers echoed through the chapel, where Leo was elected the first U.S. pope by the world's Catholic cardinals six months ago in front of frescoes by Michelangelo depicting Christ delivering the Last Judgment.

Charles, supreme governor of the Church of England, was seated at the pope's left near the altar of the chapel as Leo and Anglican Archbishop Stephen Cottrell led a service that featured the Sistine Chapel Choir and two royal choirs.

Although Charles has met the last three popes, and Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI travelled to Britain, their previous encounters never included joint prayers.

## VISIT TO THE VATICAN IS 'A HEALING' OF TURBULENT HISTORY

The King and Queen Camilla are on a state visit to the Vatican marking the closing ties between the Catholic Church and Anglican Communion, five centuries after their turbulent separation.

"There is a strong sense that this moment in the extraordinary setting of the Sistine Chapel offers a kind of healing of history," Anglican Rev. James Hawkey, canon theologian of Westminster Abbey, told Reuters.

"This would have been impossible just a generation ago," he said. "It represents how far our churches have come over the last 60 years of dialogue."

Cottrell, the Anglican Archbishop of York, stood in at the Sistine Chapel service for Sa-



▲ Pope Leo greets King Charles during a private audience at the Vatican.

rah Mullally. She was recently announced as the first woman to serve as Archbishop of Canterbury, the spiritual head of the Anglican Communion, but will not take the role until next year.

The split between the Catholic Church and the Church of England was formalized in 1534, after Pope Clement VII refused to annul King Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

Henry's desire for a male heir -- and a new wife who might provide one -- was the immediate catalyst, but other factors were also at play, involving the English crown's seizure of church assets and the growth of Protestant ideas in England.

As England swung between Catholicism and Protestantism during the reigns of Henry's daughters Mary I and Elizabeth I, hundreds of Catholics and Protestants were executed for their faith, often burned at the stake.

## CHARLES TO RECEIVE SPECIAL TITLE, SEAT AT BASILICA

Charles and Camilla, who visited the Vatican earlier this year to see Pope Francis, also had a private meeting with Leo on Thursday morning. At home in Britain, Charles' disgraced brother Prince Andrew is engulfed in a deepening crisis over abuse allegations and his ties with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The King will travel in the afternoon to

Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, one of Catholicism's four most venerated churches, where Leo has approved giving him a new title of "Royal Confrater", or brother, at the connected abbey.

Charles will also be gifted a special seat in the apse of the basilica. The wooden chair, reserved in the future for use only by British monarchs, is decorated with the king's coat of arms and the ecumenical motto "Ut unum sint" (That they may be one).

Bishop Anthony Ball, the official Anglican representative to the Vatican, said the honours "show the commitment that both of our Churches have to working for a shared future."

Buckingham Palace announced on Thursday that Charles had also approved two British honours for Leo: making him the "Papal Confrater" of St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle and conferring on him the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath.

## ANGLICAN-CATHOLIC TIES IMPROVING SINCE 1960s

The Church of England is one of 46 autonomous churches across some 165 countries that together form the Anglican Communion.

The Catholic Church, which has 1.4 billion members, and the Anglican Communion, with 85 million members, have been improving their ties since the 1960s.

The teachings of the two traditions align on many major issues, but the Catholic Church does not ordain women and generally does not allow priests to marry.

(Reuters)

# How plastic whistles are becoming an anti-ICE resistance tool in Chicago

AS the shrill sound of whistles echoed through a parking garage in Chicago's North Side on Tuesday, two people flung their car doors open, ducked inside and shrank down into their seats.

Outside, a convoy of federal immigration enforcement vehicles that had arrived in the area just minutes prior sped off.

"We just saw a bunch of guys with whistles that chased them out," said Luke, a landscaper who was working nearby and declined to share his full name.

The Trump administration in early September launched a deportation crackdown in the Chicago area, targeting what it said were hardened criminals among immigrants in the U.S. without legal status, though many noncriminals have been swept up in raids.

Since then, the piercing blow of a whistle has become a Chicago-wide means of signaling that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents are present. It warns undocumented people to flee and invites U.S. citizens to come to the scene to record arrests, give detainees legal information and discourage agents from lingering.

The aggressive immigration enforcement effort - which has no end date - has sparked widespread protests and resentment among residents. Hundreds of federal agents have fanned across the third-largest city in the U.S. and its suburbs, often carrying assault rifles and wearing military fatigues. Agents have teargassed crowds, rappelled from a Black Hawk helicopter to raid an apartment building, dragged immigrants from cars,

held people at gunpoint and shot two people, including one fatally.

Against this heavily militarized force, whistles have become a modest but effective tool to fight back.

"It grew like wildfire," said Baltazar Enriquez, president of Little Village Community Council, a community group in one of Chicago's largest Latino enclaves. "If we have to patrol our neighborhood for the next three years, we're willing to do that just to keep our community safe."

Volunteers from whistle-making parties, opens new tab and local activist groups have passed out the whistles at local festivals and parades and dropped them off at Little Free Libraries. Some residents have picked up whistles from community groups that advertised them on social media - others have simply bought them from dollar stores and Amazon.

"Our officers are highly trained," said Tricia McLaughlin, assistant secretary for public affairs at the Department of Homeland Security, and "they are not afraid of loud noises and whistles."

Their ease of use and low cost have contributed to their soaring popularity on the streets and on social media. But the impact of a whistle against squads of armed, fast-moving immigration officers is limited.

On a quiet residential street in another North Side neighborhood, residents ran out of their apartments to confront ICE officers as they detained a group of landscapers. Their whistles and shouts managed to draw a crowd and elicit names of detainees to be



▲ Community members hold whistles used to alert others about the presence of federal agents during immigration raids, after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered increased federal law enforcement presence to assist in crime prevention, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.

passed on to immigration rights groups, but officers still drove away with two people.

"I'm sure I'll cry again later," said Joanne Willer, a resident of Albany Park who used her whistle to sound the alarm about the detention. "It's just really upsetting."

Afterward, other residents of Albany Park, a Chicago neighborhood known for its diversity that was teargassed by federal immigration agents earlier this month, carried different kinds of noisemakers as they patrolled

the streets.

Jordan, who declined to share her last name out of fear of retribution, carried her son's toy train whistle.

"I'm Jewish, and I feel very personally tied to what's going on here because of our history as a Jewish people," Jordan said. "I feel like if we're not out here supporting our neighbors, nobody else is going to be doing it."

(Reuters)





By Siphesihle Dlamini  
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GET ready for an unforgettable weekend bursting with thrilling entertainment. Eswatini Daily News has spotlighted the hottest shows lighting up the Kingdom.

Don't miss out on the action happening all around Eswatini this weekend.

►► **LAST FRIDAY GAGS WITH CEDRIC & FRIENDS**  
**When: Friday**  
**Where: Molly's House of Grills**  
**Fee: E70**

Molly's House of Grills in Mbabane is set to become the new epicentre of laughter as it prepares to host the eagerly awaited comedy series, 'Last Friday Gags with Cedric & Friends.' Set for October 24, 2025, at precisely 7:01 pm, this monthly event promises an electrifying blend of humour, camaraderie, and culinary delight, breathing fresh life into Eswatini's comedy landscape. Molly's House of Grills has been a beloved dining destination in Mbabane, celebrated for its mouthwatering cuisine and warm atmosphere. At the helm of this comedy revival is Cedric, a charismatic comedian and host whose passion for the art form is palpable. Alongside him, a dynamic lineup featuring Mdura, Dr Shakes, and Ntsetselo will take to the stage, each bringing their distinctive comedic voices and styles. This diversity ensures a rich tapestry of humour, from sharp social commentary to lighthearted storytelling, catering to a wide array of tastes and sensibilities. Accessibility is a key component of the event's strategy. Tickets are priced to welcome a broad audience, with presale tickets available at E50 and door tickets at E70. Beyond the laughter, 'Last Friday Gags' offers a complete night out.

►► **SPRING FIESTA**  
**Where: Espinho Lounge**  
**When: Friday**  
**Fee: E50**

Da Mabusa, one of South Africa's most dynamic and influential musical talents, is set to perform at the Espinho Lounge in Siteki on October 24, 2025. This highly anticipated event promises to be a landmark night in the local entertainment calendar, drawing fans eager to experience the electrifying energy and soulful sounds that have made Da Mabusa a household name. The announcement, made via the Espinho Lounge's social media channels, has already generated significant buzz.

The venue described the upcoming show as more than just a party, but a "concert-level experience" featuring a heavyweight lineup of DJs alongside Da Mabusa's live performance. The event will kick off at 6 pm and continue late into the night, offering attendees a full evening of music and celebration. Fans are encouraged to secure presale tickets priced at E50, with gate tickets available for E80. The Espinho Lounge event will also showcase the talents of DJs Njebza, Maye, and Moon-Elo.

►► **SWAZI PLAZA NIGHTS**  
**When: Friday**  
**Where: Swazi Plaza**  
**Fee: Free**

The vibrant Mbabane is set to come alive once again as two of the country's most dynamic artists, vocalist Celumusa and Hip-Hop DJ Wassabee, prepare to headline the highly anticipated Swazi Plaza Nights event. Scheduled for October 24, 2025, at the Food Court in Swazi Plaza, Mbabane, this 26th edition promises an evening filled with soulful music, electrifying beats, and a celebration of local talent.

Swazi Plaza took to social media to announce the event, highlighting the unique blend of artistry and entertainment that attendees can expect. "Swazi Plaza Nights, 26th Edition! This Friday, 24 October,

the stage lights up at the Food Court, Corporate Place, from 6:30 pm with another unforgettable evening of local artistry, great food, and good vibes," the announcement read. Celumusa, renowned for his soulful Afro Pop and Afro Soul sound, is the voice behind hits like "Sondzela" and "Tears." Joining him is Wassabee, a trailblazing figure in Eswatini's hip hop scene. As a DJ and producer, Wassabee has carved out a distinct niche with her innovative sound and energetic performances.

►► **ORYX FRIDAY**  
**When: Friday**  
**Where: Oryx Restaurant**  
**Fee: Free**

The nightlife scene of Ezulwini is gearing up for an electrifying experience as South African deep house maestro Chronical Deep prepares to headline a major event at Oryx Restaurant and Lounge, Gables. The event is set for October 24, 2025, showcasing a blend of international flair and local talent in a free-entry event running from 5 pm until late.

The October 24 event at Oryx will not only feature Chronical Deep's dynamic live performance but also spotlight a stellar lineup of supporting artists. DJ Sabz, a well-known name in the region, will co-headline the night, adding his unique energy to the mix. Local stars including The Bishop, Fantasy, Bandora, Selby, President, and Katz will also grace the stage, promising a diverse and engaging musical journey for attendees.

►► **TEACHERS' DAY BASH**  
**When: Friday**  
**Where: Mavuso Trade Centre**  
**Fee: E200**

The 2025 SNAT Teachers' Day Bash is shaping up to be one of the most electrifying music events in Eswatini this year, uniting a stellar lineup of local and South African

artists to celebrate the nation's educators. Scheduled for October 24, 2025, at the prestigious Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre, this event will be an unforgettable night of entertainment, culture, and community spirit. Eswatini's music scene will be well represented by a diverse group of homegrown talents. Gospel icon Phathwakahle Mabuza will bring her soul-stirring vocals to the stage, while award-winning singer Linda Dlamini adds his powerful presence.

The dynamic M Nation and Afro-pop sensation Young Zesh, who recently took home a 2024 NACAs, are set to energise the crowd alongside popular acts such as Zaimarn, DJ Cup, Culolam, and the Trend Twins. Other local favourites including DJ Lolo, Tibza, Cybos, Lady Zee, DJ MBO, and As 4 Jerry P round out the impressive roster.

►► **MOUNT ZION EXPERIENCE.**  
**When: Friday**  
**Where: Metropolitan Evangelical Church**  
**Fee: E150**

South African gospel star Takie Ndou has been revealed to be part of the star-studded lineup for the highly anticipated Mount Zion Experience. Scheduled for October 24, 2025, at the Metropolitan Evangelical Church, The Mount Zion Experience is set to kick off at 7 pm and is expected to continue late into the night. Attendees can anticipate an evening filled with powerful music, heartfelt prayers, and a strong sense of community as they gather to celebrate their shared faith.

This year's event has confirmed an impressive lineup of acts, including Sphiwo Ndoni, Shekinah Motsa, Mzayoni, Zamar Mabuza, and Simiso Simelane, among others. Each artist brings their unique style and message, ensuring a diverse and enriching experience for all attendees. The event aims to bring together believers from all walks of

life, fostering a sense of unity and celebration of faith. Ticket prices are structured to accommodate various attendees, with presale tickets available for E150, while tickets purchased at the gate will cost E200. For those desiring a more exclusive experience, VIP tickets are offered at E400, providing additional perks for those looking to enhance their evening.

►► **SPRING BASH**  
**When: Saturday**  
**Where: IF's Lounge**  
**Fee: E200**

Sensational Amapiano artist Babalwa M takes centre stage as the headliner for the eagerly awaited Spring Bash. The event will be a day brimming with vibrant rhythms, diverse performances, and an electrifying atmosphere that will captivate music lovers from noon until late. Babalwa M, often hailed as the 'Queen of Private School Amapiano,' has carved a significant niche in the South African music industry.

The Spring Bash Phase 2 lineup is a testament to the rich and diverse soundscape of the region. Alongside Babalwa M, the event will showcase South African talents including Jay Sax, Linda Dlamini, Mayeem, Rekorder, Obsession, Mistosoul, and Thick B. The excitement builds on the foundation laid by the Phase 1 lineup, which featured standout performers such as Daliwonga, !Sooks, Zwile, Rina, Yamkela, Tairo, The Best Duo, and Acoustic Soul. Ticketing options for the Spring Bash have been carefully designed to accommodate various preferences and budgets. General pre-sale tickets are priced at E200, with a slight increase to E250 at the gate, making the event accessible to a broad audience. For those seeking premium experience, VIP tickets are available at E400, offering exclusive access and enhanced amenities to elevate the celebration.



# Top shows you can't miss



# Nothando Hlophe charts at Top 50 Spotify Daily

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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ESWATINI'S gospel sensation Nothando Hlophe has made a remarkable breakthrough by joining South African gospel heavyweights Nontokozo Mkhize and Xolly Mncwango as the only female gospel artists to feature in the prestigious Top 50 South Africa Spotify Daily Chart in 2025.

This achievement highlights her growing influence and the rising popularity of gospel music across the region. The Spotify Daily Chart for South Africa is a dynamic ranking system that reflects the most streamed and shared songs by South African listeners daily. It captures real-time trends and shows what music is resonating most strongly within the country's vibrant and diverse music scene. For a gospel artist to break into this competitive chart dominated by various genres is a testament to the powerful connection between faith-based music and contemporary audiences.

Expressing her gratitude, Nothando Hlophe shared, "I'm beyond grateful to be listed among Nontokozo Mkhize and Xolly Mncwango as one of the only gospel female artists in 2025 (so far) to enter the Top 50 South Africa Spotify Daily Chart. To everyone streaming, sharing, and spreading the message, thank you from the bottom of my heart. This isn't just my win, it's ours! Let's keep pushing the sound of faith higher."

Nothando's latest single, "Methodist



▲ Nothando Hlophe.

Medley," has been a standout track from her recently released album 'A New Dawn.' The medley blends traditional worship elements with contemporary gospel sounds, creating a soulful and uplifting experience that has resonated deeply with

listeners. The song's success is evident not only on Spotify but also on YouTube, where it has amassed over 450,000 views, underscoring its widespread appeal and the emotional connection it has fostered among worshippers and music lovers alike.

## IF's Lounge's Spring Bash launched

THE countdown is on for the highly anticipated 3rd edition of IF's Lounge Spring Bash, a vibrant celebration set to light up Manzini this coming weekend.

Following its official launch on October 22, 2025, at IF Lounge's Manzini branch, the event has already generated a buzz of excitement. The launch itself was a vivid prelude to what attendees can expect. Guests arrived adorned in colourful spring outfits, perfectly embodying the event's lively theme. The venue was transformed with floral decorations and bright hues, creating an immersive atmosphere that radiated joy and anticipation.

MC Thando Ntshangase energised the crowd with his magnetic presence and engaging humour. His role went beyond mere hosting; he fostered a sense of unity and celebration among attendees. "Tonight, we kick off a celebration of community and culture," Ntshangase proclaimed. The event's founder, Thulani Ntsangase, reflected on the journey of the Spring Bash, which began just two years ago but has quickly become a cornerstone of local cultural expression.

He expressed deep gratitude to sponsors and partners who have supported the event's growth. "This event is a testament to our community's resilience and creativity," Ntshangase said. The upcoming weekend's lineup is one of the event's most exciting



▲ IF's Lounge's Spring Bash founder Thulani Ntshangase.

features. Headliners such as Daliwonga, Babalwa M, and !Sooks will share the stage with a host of talented local artists, promising a diverse and captivating musical experience. Ntshangase's enthusiasm was clear: "We've curated an incredible array of talent that will captivate our audience and create lasting memories."

Local government support was evident through the presence of Mayor Wesley Dlamini of Manzini Town Council, who highlighted the broader significance of the Spring Bash. "Events like this not only bring joy but also foster growth in

our community," he remarked. Dlamini's commitment to the event underscored its role in boosting the local economy and community cohesion. "I look forward to welcoming everyone this weekend and experiencing the spirit of togetherness that defines our town," he added.

Safety was also a key focus, with Detective Sergeant Mngomezulu Vuma from the Manzini Police Station assuring attendees of a secure environment throughout the festivities. "We are committed to ensuring a secure environment for everyone," he said.



▲ Sands.

## Poetry & Acoustics welcomes Sands

SANDS, Eswatini's celebrated musical maestro, is set to captivate audiences at the upcoming Poetry & Acoustics event, scheduled for the evening of October 30, 2025, at the Bahle Gallery.

Hosted by the Mic'd Emotions collective, this monthly event has become a cornerstone of Eswatini's vibrant arts scene, offering a unique blend of music, poetry, and storytelling that fosters deep community engagement.

Renowned for his soulful melodies and profound lyrical depth, Sands brings a rich musical heritage and a distinct artistic vision to the stage. His performance at Poetry & Acoustics is more than a concert; it is a celebration of Eswatini's flourishing creative landscape, highlighting the diverse talents that continue to shape the nation's cultural identity. Audiences can expect an evening where every note and word resonates with emotional intensity and authenticity.

Poetry & Acoustics is designed as a sanctuary for artistic expression, where the boundaries between music and poetry dissolve to create a dynamic tapestry of sound and emotion. The event's format encourages participation through open mic sessions, offering emerging artists a vital platform to present their work and engage with an audience eager to discover new voices. This nurturing environment not only spotlights established performers like Sands but also cultivates the next generation of creative talent.

### Fusion

The atmosphere at Poetry & Acoustics is intimate and welcoming, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural exchange. The fusion of acoustic jazz, poetic verse, and soulful melodies crafts a spellbinding experience that invites attendees on a journey of self-reflection and emotional connection. This event transcends traditional entertainment, positioning itself as a cultural phenomenon that redefines nightlife in Eswatini by prioritising inclusivity and amplifying marginalised voices.

With tickets priced at E200, Poetry & Acoustics remain accessible while promising an extraordinary evening of artistic exploration. Patrons are encouraged to secure their spots early to witness this celebration of creativity and community. Sands' anticipated performance is poised to be a highlight, reinforcing the event's reputation as a beacon of inspiration and a testament to the transformative power of storytelling through music and poetry.

In summary, the Poetry & Acoustics event featuring Sands is a landmark occasion in Eswatini's cultural calendar. It exemplifies the country's commitment to nurturing artistic talent and fostering a vibrant, inclusive creative community. Attendees can look forward to an unforgettable night where music and poetry converge to inspire, challenge, and unite.



# Prince Kaybee allows producers to remix his old hits

PRINCE Kaybee, born Kabelo Motsamai, has opened the door for producers to remix his classic hits, inviting a new wave of creativity to reinterpret the tracks that shaped his career.

The move came after a producer sent him a direct message saying, “Sawbona, bhuti Kabelo. Maninga dropa iRemix yeCharlotte uzongishaya? (Hello, brother Kabelo. If I dropped the Charlotte remix, would you beat me?)”

“Charlotte” is a track Kaybee released in 2017 featuring Lady Zamar.

Kaybee shared the message on social media with the caption: “Lol shame man, I just wanna say to all producers that I do not mind if you remix any of the hits we did back in the day. If it helps you get where you need to be, get in there and be as creative as you possibly can. Good luck.”

One user reminded him, “Remember what Ralf said to you, Kabelo. That, ‘All the classics must remain untouched?’”

This refers to a 2023 moment when Ralf GUM refused Kaybee permission to remix his hit “Take Me To My Love”, which features Monique Bingham.

Kaybee had expressed interest in reworking the track, but GUM responded simply: “DON’T.”

GUM explained that remixes often do not benefit the owners of the original song and stressed the importance of preserving classics. He said that he meant no harm in his response, but that some songs should remain as they are. Kaybee addressed the reminder on social media, offering his perspective on music and creativity.

“If you think I am an a\*\*hole, that’s fine,” he wrote.

“Just say you don’t like Prince Kaybee instead of hiding behind ‘classics can’t be touched.’ Ralf GUM’s response was personal. He responded with his emotions based on what the industry has made me look like. Music evolves because of remixes.”

“The reason we have amapiano is because of remixing house music by slowing it down.



▲ Prince Kaybee, born Kabelo Motsamai, has opened the door for producers to remix his classic hits, inviting a new wave of creativity to reinterpret the tracks that shaped his career.

The reason we have house music is because of remixing pop music back in Chicago with up-tempo beats. That’s why Ralf GUM even exists - because of remixes.”

He continued, “Gatekeeping music or the

creative process prevents innovation. Even if it’s not remixing a classic, taking a shot at someone else’s idea that inspired you can open a whole new world of ideas and even birth a new genre altogether.” (IOL)



## North West shocks fans with fake face tattoos, nose ring

KIM Kardashian’s daughter, North West, has once again gone viral, but this time, fans are more concerned than impressed.

In a series of now-viral TikTok videos, West unveiled her dramatic transformation while posing and dancing with friends on a joint TikTok account she shares with her mother.

West sported long blue braids, bright blue contact lenses, a bunch of silver chains and a handful of henna.

But what had netizens’ jaws drop were West’s fake face tattoos, which included a star under her eye and a word written in script on her cheek, along with black grillz covering her teeth and a faux nose ring.

“Fake piercings and fake tats for life”, West captioned one video while lip-syncing to a popular TikTok sound with her friends.

In another video, fans got a glimpse of the group travelling on a private jet to enjoy a concert together in their co-ordinated looks. This attention-grabbing makeover comes just days after Kardashian spoke openly about her parenting challenges on the “Call Her Daddy” podcast.

She admitted that finding a balance between West’s creativity and her young age has been quite a learning experience.

Kardashian discussed some of North’s recent fashion choices, including the corset West wore during a summer trip to Rome that drew heavy criticism from the public.

(Bang Showbiz)

## Noluthando Ngema debuts as new Sihle in Outlaws S2

“OUTLAWS”, this November returns for a new season on Mzansi Magic, with a new Sihle.

Actress Noluthando Ngema will replace Nirvana Nokwe, who portrayed Sihle Biyela in the first season of the epic drama.

Ngema can’t wait to see herself on screen, as this is her first-ever TV break, and she is looking forward to seeing how viewers will react to the new season.

For her audition, the young actress, sent in a self-tape and had to wait weeks before getting a call back. During that waiting period, she kept having dreams of people telling her they’d seen her on television.

“I even bumped into strangers who said they loved my work, and I’d think, ‘I haven’t done any TV work yet!’ To me, it felt like confirmation that something great was on the way. When I finally got the call, they said

they loved my audition tape and invited me for a chemistry test. And the rest, as they say, is history.”

To prepare for the role, Ngema had a few acting sessions with actress, director, and acting coach Ferry Jeje. “She is such a sweetheart,” gushes Ngema.

“The sessions were so casual that they didn’t even feel like formal acting lessons. She helped ease me into understanding Sihle and getting a deeper connection to the character. I also did some character studies, watching other roles that I felt resonated with Sihle, to help me bring out the elements I wanted to tap into.” Ngema also read a few books and spent time studying people, which helped her embody the character.

During the shooting of “Outlaws,” Ngema fell off a horse twice, admitting that horseback riding proved to be a challenge for her.

“I’ve done horseback riding before, but it was my first time galloping, when the horse goes full speed. “It completely caught me off guard; I didn’t expect it. One moment, I felt like I was flying, and the next, I was on the ground. It was fun, though.”

Another scene that was particularly difficult for Ngema was probably the very last scene. She explains that not only was it such an emotional and intense scene for Sihle, but also for her as an actor. “The minute the director called ‘cut’, Sihle’s tears became my very own, because we both, in that moment, were bidding farewell to something so dear and precious to us. That was quite hard.”

Other new cast members, including Thandolwethu Zondi as Thunzi Biyela and Mamodibe Ramodibe as Buang.mn. “Outlaws” season 2 is set to start on Mzansi Magic from Saturday, November 22. (IOL)



▲ Actress Noluthando Ngema will replace Nirvana Nokwe, who portrayed Sihle Biyela in the first season of the epic drama.



Exercise? Me?

LOSING weight happens by not only changing your eating habits, but also stepping up your exercise routine. Regular exercise will go a long way in achieving your goals. To lose weight, you should aim to get at least 300 minutes of moderately intense activity each week. Here are some exercises that can help you on that journey. Just remember to first talk with your doctor about which ones might be best for you.

Walking

If you were to add half an hour of brisk walking to your daily routine, you could burn about 150 more calories than you usually do each day. The faster and longer you walk, the more calories you burn. Walking is a great option if you're new to regular exercise. Start with shorter journeys and build up to longer, more intense ones.

Jumping Rope

If you're looking for a cheap piece of workout equipment you'll be able to take on trips, a jump-rope just might be for you. Jumping rope is a fantastic way to burn calories fast. In fact, you'll burn more of them by jumping rope than walking on a treadmill for the same amount of time. You'll also work multiple muscle groups, from your core to your upper and lower body. Jumping rope can also improve your coordination.

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

High-intensity interval training (also called HIIT) is a type of workout that switches back and forth from intense physical activity to less-intense exercise. You shouldn't do it every day, but it's very effective for weight loss. You'll burn more calories with HIIT than with steady cardio. The intense exercise keeps your body working and in fat-burning mode for up to 24 hours after your workout ends.

Cycling

Cycling is another great way to lose weight, and it's a low-impact, adaptable exercise. You can burn about 400-750 calories an hour riding a bike, depending on your weight, how fast you're going, and what type of cycling you're doing.

Swimming

It can be hard to be motivated to work out if your knees are achy or your back hurts. If you're in that boat, swimming is an ideal exercise. It's easy on your joints, you'll use both your upper and lower body, and you'll get a good cardio workout. You'll reap the benefits from the resistance of the water, too. If you swim for a half-hour a few times a week, you'll lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers. It'll also bring down your bad cholesterol and blood pressure.

Strength Training

This type of exercise uses resistance to build strength and muscle. It not only helps you lose weight, but also helps you keep the weight off by building muscle. That'll help your body burn more fat. Try to do some strength training 3-5 times a week, for about

an hour each time. Don't forget to rest a day between every 2 days that you do it.

Pilates

Research says that Pilates -- exercises usually done on a mat or with various tools that emphasize core strength -- can make you stronger and help you keep a healthy weight. The intensity of a Pilates class depends on your needs. You can find some classes or demonstrations online or at your local gym.

Jogging

Jogging is an aerobic exercise -- it uses oxygen. This can help you lose weight. A good jog can also raise something called your metabolic rate for up to 24 hours. So, you'll be in fat-burning mode even after you've crossed your daily finish line. Done regularly, jogging can help boost your metabolism for a long period of time.

Yoga

This is a practice that combines physical activity and meditation. It's a popular way to practice mindfulness after a long day at

work, too. But the benefits don't stop there. Research suggests that over time, people who are overweight and do yoga at least once a week for 30 minutes lose weight and have lower BMIs. Folks who do yoga are also more mindful eaters, meaning they're more likely to know when they're truly hungry and when they're full.

Stair Climbing

Another low-cost, versatile exercise for weight loss is stair climbing. Although you could use a machine, all you really need for this exercise is a trusty set of stairs. Climbing just two flights of stairs every day can lead to 6 pounds of weight loss in a year. It can also add to the amount of good cholesterol in your blood and help keep your joints, muscles, and bones healthy. If you're looking for a more adventurous way of losing weight, hiking might be the move for you. It usually involves walking in nature and avoiding the obstacles around you, like tree roots and rocks. Hiking can lead to weight loss, especially if you do it regularly.

WebMD



Best exercises for weight loss







APPLES are America’s most popular fruit.

They’re grown in orchards all across the country and harvested in the early fall.

Green apples are slightly more sour than red apples. Common varieties of green apple include:

- Granny Smith
- Crispin
- Shizuka
- Pippin

Each variety has a slightly different taste, and cooks may prefer one type of green apple over another, depending on what they’re making. For most people, choosing the best green apple is a matter of personal preference depending on how tart or sweet you like your apples.

Health Benefits

“An apple a day keeps the doctor away,” the saying goes. Considering the many health benefits that come with eating apples, this dietary proverb may not be too far from the truth. Here are a few of the health benefits you can get from eating green apples:

Improve Heart Health

Eating apples has been shown to improve heart health, lowering the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases.

The exact reason apples improve heart health is unclear. One contributing factor may be the high levels of dietary fiber in apples, as dietary fiber has been linked to lowering LDLcholesterol.

Reduce Risk of Developing Type 2 Diabetes

Eating as few as a couple of green apples each week may reduce your chances of developing type 2 diabetes, according to one study, though more research needs to be done. It remains unclear whether the compounds in green apples help people manage their diabetes symptoms.

Promote Digestive Health

Green apples contain a compound called pectin, a fiber source that works as a prebiotic to promote the growth of healthy bacteria in your gut. The pectin found in green apples can help you break down foods more efficiently.

The high fiber content in green apples can have other impacts on your digestive health as well. Fiber is shown to stimulate the digestive system, helping with both constipation and diarrhea. People with Irritable Bowel Syndrome and other digestive disorders may find relief for their symptoms by adding more fiber-rich foods into their diets.

Green apples aren’t just packed with dietary fiber. They are also a good source of:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Calcium
- Iron

Nutrients per Serving

- One medium green apple contains:
- Calories: 95
- Fat: 0 grams
- Cholesterol: 0 milligrams
- Sodium: 2 milligrams
- Carbohydrates: 25 grams
- Dietary Fiber: 4 grams
- Sugar: 19 grams



# Health benefits of green apples



- Protein: 1 gram
- Portion Sizes

Although apples are good for you in moderation, they are relatively high in carbohydrates, especially sugar. A medium apple counts as one serving of the recommended 4-5 servings of fruit per day.

How to Prepare Green Apples

Apples are one of the most versatile fruits to work with in the kitchen.

While they can be eaten raw, and pair nicely with peanut butter for a mid-afternoon snack, they can also be used in cooking and baking.

As apples cook, the sugars break down, sweetening and lending flavor to whatever they’re cooked with.

Some of the best ways to prepare green apples include:

- Cooked on the stovetop with butter and cinnamon
- Baked into a pie
- Mixed into a slaw with cabbage and cider vinegar



- Chopped and tossed in a garden salad
- Cooked and served with pork chops or potato pancakes.
- Hollowed out and baked with brown sugar and pecans



# NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ A pigeon flies in front of a residential building damaged during a Russian drone and missile strike, in Kyiv, Ukraine.



▲ Fifth-generation ranchers Victoria Lovato and her husband Ismael Rivera walk along a damaged road adjacent to their ranch where repeated flooding has torn through their property since the Hermits Peak-Calf Canyon Fire in 2022, in Mora, New Mexico.



▲ Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy leaves his house on the day of his incarceration at the Sante prison to begin his five-year prison sentence for criminal conspiracy over attempts to raise campaign funds from Libya, in Paris, France.



▲ Kites fly at Dolphin Beach ahead of the Cape Town International Kite Festival, which raises funds for mental health support, in Cape Town, South Africa.



▲ Fans with shaved heads sit in a cinema hall waiting for a free preview of Yorgos Lanthimos's new film 'Bugonia', in Culver City, California.



# ATP boss Gaudenzi defends schedule amid player workload scrutiny

ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi defended men's tennis's crowded calendar on Thursday, saying scheduling remains the players' choice and that the tour is working to set clearer incentives so the right number of matches are played across the season.

Speaking after the ATP announced a new Masters 1000 event in Saudi Arabia from 2028, Gaudenzi pushed back on criticism from leading players over a year-round grind. "Tennis is quite unique in that a player can play one match or seven matches in two weeks," Gaudenzi told reporters on Thursday.

"We operate in an environment where players are independent contractors and they choose their own schedules. Some who go deep at big events play fewer tournaments; others need more because they lose earlier and need matches."

### REVAMP AIMS TO OPTIMISE THE CALENDAR

Gaudenzi said the ATP's ongoing "Vision 28" revamp aims to optimise the calendar and strengthen the tour's "premium product" – the Grand Slams, Masters 1000s and season-ending Finals – while improving rules and incentives so players build schedules "in a waterfall system" starting from the biggest events.

"Philosophically speaking, the direction in which we're going, because we're doing a revision of our rules with the goal of creating a new product, Vision 28, is that players should play in a sort of a waterfall system where if you're a top player, your schedule should start with slams, Masters and the Finals," he said.

"When you don't perform well or need matches, you can play down at the 500s."

He said the ATP could "help create better rules" and that "the off-season should be longer – for players and for fans."

But, he added, "protecting players from themselves would require a completely different structure where they're employees and the tour controls when they play."

His comments come amid renewed scrutiny of the workload.

Women's world No 2 Iga Swiatek has called the calendar "relentless" and warned she may skip mandatory events to prioritise health.

### INJURIES AND LIMITED RECOVERY TIME

Men's players including Jack Draper, Holger Rune, Alexander Zverev and Daniil Medvedev have also highlighted injuries and limited recovery time as Masters tournaments expand to 12 days.

Gaudenzi acknowledged those concerns but argued that the open system – in which players decide when and where to compete – inevitably creates uneven workloads, with elite performers playing 80 matches in strong seasons and others chasing games and points lower down the ladder.

"If the goal is a fair range – say 70 to 85 matches a year – then some players will naturally need more tournaments than others," he said.

Gaudenzi said the new Saudi partnership would be used to boost the Masters bonus pool to encourage top-player participation.

While some players have been criticised for entering exhibition tournaments amid a heavy workload, world No 1 Carlos Alcaraz



▲ ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi.

last week defended playing in the lucrative Six Kings Slam in Riyadh as less taxing than regular tour events – another sign of the competing incentives players navigate.

Gaudenzi said the ATP would keep refining incentives, rules and the off-season, but the basic balance between player freedom

and tour control was unlikely to change.

"If you want a long, successful career, you say 'no' more often than 'yes' and build around the biggest events," he said.

"That's the reality at the top of the game – and ultimately, it's the players who choose." (Supersport)

## Ryan relishing Gary Player CC history and Blu Label Unlimited Challenge format

TYRONE Ryan embraced the modified stableford format of the Blu Label Unlimited Challenge and claimed the lead on 22 points after Wednesday's first round at both the Gary Player Country Club and Lost City Golf Club courses. Ryan played the challenging Gary Player Country Club in the first round and teed off the 10th hole as he worked his way into a nine-point lead. But it was the format and how it translated to his strategy on the golf course that most excited Ryan.

"It's just such an amazing place with so much history behind it. The greats of the game have walked these fairways. The format is nice in the sense that

you need to be making birdies and eagles, so you need to be aggressive without shooting yourself in the foot. I'm always having birdie in the back of my mind in some shape or form," Ryan said.

"The round was good. I had a lovely hole-out for eagle on my ninth hole – funny enough with the same club that I got a hole-in-one with last week," he said, referring to his ace in last week's Fortress Invitational where he finished tied fourth to give him good momentum coming into this week.

"I also had a chip-in eagle on my 10th hole and carried the momentum through with birdies on my 13th, 15th, 16th and 17th holes."

(Supersport)



▲ Tyrone Ryan.

## Verstappen chasing glory as McLaren duo bid to bounce back

MAX Verstappen chases a fourth win in five starts this weekend as he bids to heap more pressure on McLaren duo Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris at the Mexico City Grand Prix, one of his most rewarding tracks.

Red Bull's four-time world champion, who has won five times in seven years at the high-altitude Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, has cut Piastri's lead ahead of him, in third place, from 104 points to 40 since August with a scintillating burst of form.

Piastri still leads teammate Norris by 14 points, but he has lost his metronomic consistency and, as McLaren appear to be floundering to match Red Bull for pace, he appears also, like Norris, to be weighed down by the pressure of the title battle.

After finishing on the podium in every race bar one since the season-opener in Australia, his last three results have been a retirement, fourth and fifth.

His qualifying form has deteriorated at a similar rate.

Norris has also struggled for consistency, but appeared in Texas last weekend to have regained some confidence and pace as he finished second behind Verstappen, who had started from pole and also won the sprint.

He remains, however, without a win since the Hungarian race in August.

"They are weighed down with this



▲ Max Verstappen.

looming battle," said former Indycar driver and prominent analyst James Hinchcliffe, speaking on the F1 Nation podcast.

"Even Red Bull in 2024, started the season strong, but once McLaren caught up... you started seeing their pit stops falter a little bit..."

"Pressure is an interesting thing. You always want to be the hunted because it means you've got the points lead, but passing is tough in F1 – on track and in a championship."

### 'WITH MAX IT CAN HAPPEN'

With the experience of four title triumphs, Verstappen heads into the season's

run-in knowing what to expect and enjoying himself.

"If it comes down to the last race and they are tight on points, maybe in that moment Max is the man to follow," said two-time world champion Fernando Alonso.

"The McLarens have enough car advantage to fight between them, but with Max it can happen as in 2021."

While Red Bull bid to snatch glory from McLaren in Mexico's thin air and the final races, Ferrari travel in hope of an unlikely repeat of their last victory, (Supersport)



# Messi signs Inter Miami contract extension

LIONEL Messi has agreed a contract extension with Inter Miami, Major League Soccer confirmed on Thursday.

“Official: Leo Messi will continue to be an MLS player with Inter Miami,” the league’s Spanish language account on X said.

Inter Miami’s X feed posted a video of Messi signing a contract sitting at a table in the middle of the club’s new stadium, which is under construction, with the simple caption: “He’s Home.”

The Argentine superstar’s new contract will see him remain with Inter through the end of the 2028 season, sources with knowledge of the deal confirmed to AFP.

The 38-year-old World Cup-winner’s current contract expires at the end of the 2025 MLS season.

A new deal had been viewed as a formality after club sources told AFP last month that the franchise had reached an agreement on an extension.

Messi’s contract ensures he will remain in competitive action until and long after the 2026 World Cup hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The tournament gets under way on 11 June, with the final to be played at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey on 19 July.

Messi moved to Inter Miami in 2023 after an unhappy spell at Paris Saint-Germain, but the bulk of his



▲ Lionel Messi.

stellar career was spent at Barcelona, where he played from 2004 to 2021 after coming through the youth system at the Spanish giants.

At Barcelona, he won the LaLiga title 10 times and lifted the UEFA Champions League trophy on four occasions.

In 2022, he led Argentina to World Cup glory in Qatar and has expressed a desire to try to retain the trophy next year.

He has scored 114 international goals and also won the Copa America twice with Argentina, in 2021 and 2024.

## MLS GOALS HISTORY

Messi could play at a sixth World Cup next year, which would set a new all-time record, although he

could be matched by long-time rival Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal.

The eight-time Ballon d’Or winner is also just three goals short of Miroslav Klose’s record of 16 career World Cup goals.

Argentina comfortably booked a spot at next year’s finals, finishing nine points clear at the top of the South American qualifying table.

Messi finished as the top scorer with eight goals, including a brace in what may have been his last competitive match on home soil against Venezuela two weeks ago.

He was named the MLS Most Valuable Player in the 2024 season even though Inter Miami were eliminated in the playoffs.

(Supersport)

# Ryan holds on to Blu Label Unlimited Challenge lead

TYRONE Ryan held onto his lead in the Blu Label Unlimited Challenge but after a slightly tougher second round in which he added seven points to climb to 29 points overall.

Ryan played the Lost City Golf Club on Thursday and had to work harder for his lead than his opening 22 points over the Gary Player Country Club course.

“It was a tricky day out there with the wind. I couldn’t come to grips with the wind so that was tough. Between the pin positions and the wind, I struggled to have standard shots. I had a lot of awkward yardages. It was a battle out there today, but I kept it together.”

It opened the door for Yurav Premrall to close the gap as his nearest challenger just five points adrift of him.

And Hennie du Plessis continues to impress on his comeback from injury as he shares third place with Anthony Michael on 23 points.

Premrall played the Gary Player on Thursday and made 13 points on a golf course where he has fond memories, having won the Nedbank Junior Challenge here while still an amateur and also the Freddie Tait Cup for the leading amateur in the 2021 Investec South African Open.

He clearly felt at home as he picked up the most points on the Gary



▲ Tyrone Ryan.

Player Country Club on day two.

“It’s one of my favourite events and venues for the year and I always look forward to coming back to play this event,” said Premrall.

“The golf courses are really nice. It’s a lot softer compared to last year, so it’s easier to make birdies. I just need to keep on doing what I am doing. The format is really cool – it rewards you for making birdies, so I’m going to have to make a lot of them. I am looking forward to what the next two days will bring.”

In joint third place, Du Plessis has been enjoying his return to compe-

titive golf following injury. “I played with zero expectations and just came here to see where my game is at, and I’m very happy. I’m in the mix so I’ll keep my foot on the pedal. I’m still trying to win a tournament and I wouldn’t have come here if I didn’t think my game was ready to compete with these guys.”

Another highlight of Thursday’s second round was a hole-in-one, with Deon Germishuys acing the 155-metre par-three 16th hole with a seven iron and earning himself 50 000 Skybucks from Airlink.

(Supersport)

# Augusta chairman on Masters criteria change: ‘Golf is a global game’

AUGUSTA National Golf Club chairman Fred Ridley said the recent change in invitation criteria announced by the Masters was driven by the increased international representation at the tournament.

Augusta National Golf Club and The R&A jointly announced on August 26 a change in qualification criteria to ensure “strong international pathways into both major championships.” That included removing automatic Masters qualification for winners of FedEx Cup Fall events, while awarding invitations to the winners of six national opens beginning in 2026.

Speaking ahead of this week’s Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship in Dubai, which also grants a place in the Masters and Open Championship fields to the winner, Ridley said the Masters tournament committee was compelled to reward “historic” national opens.

“International competition has always been a big part of the Masters Tournament. That representation internationally has grown over the years to where it’s pretty much 50/50, and maybe even a few more, international players,” Ridley said Thursday at the Emirates Golf Club, per Golf Digest. “So, we thought it was appropriate to sort of carry on that tradition and the culture that we’ve established at the Masters.”

Masters invites are now extended to the winners of the Australian Open, Scottish Open, South African Open,

Spanish Open, Japan Open and Hong Kong Open. England’s Marco Penge earned a spot in the 2026 Masters by winning the Spanish Open while last week’s Japan Open was won by Naoyuki Kataoka, who entered the tournament ranked 500th in the world.

“Golf is a global game, and I think we always want to recognise that,” Ridley said. “We felt that not only were we living true to our values, but we also were hopefully maybe just as this championship has inspired young amateurs around the Asia-Pacific region, we hope that that incentive of awarding the winners an invitation, a spot in the Masters Tournament as well as The Open Championship, would also generate additional interest in those countries.”

“I know that in Japan recently that was the case. I think it will be the case in all these countries. So we are very excited about that change in our qualifications.”

The R&A qualifies golfers for The Open Championship through the R&A’s Open Qualifying Series, which consists of 15 tournaments across 13 countries.

“We (also) believe golf is a global game and we want the strongest international fields at our respective tournament and championship,” R&A CEO Mark Darbon said.

The 90th edition of the Masters is scheduled for April 9-12, 2026. The 154th Open will be played July 16-19 at Royal Birkdale in England.

(Supersport)



▲ Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley.



# Mancoba Nhlabatsi out of local cross-country qualifiers



By Sibusiso Masilela  
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LOCAL marathon king Mancoba Nhlabatsi will miss the local cross-country competition scheduled for Saturday in Lobamba. Nhlabatsi is currently in Lesotho

where he is nursing a knee injury which cost him the 2025 Imbube marathon title on October 18, 2025. Furthermore, he recently failed to defend his title in the annual road race to South African veteran runner Charles Tjiane at Somhlolo National Stadium. Nhlabatsi confirmed the latest news when contacted. “I won’t be part of the local

cross-country marathon as I am still nursing a knee injury that has made it difficult for me to train and compete. I am confident that I will recover soon so that I can continue focusing on my career,” he said. The local country championships will help the mother body select a national team to represent the country in the 2025 Southern African Athletics Association regional championships, scheduled for December 6, 2025, in Zambia. The local qualifier will have four categories: 10km, 6km, and 8km, under the auspices of Athletics Eswatini.

Athletics Eswatini Chief Operations Officer (COO) Mathokoza Dlamini invited runners to attend the race in numbers. “We are looking forward to the cross-country championships, where outstanding athletes will stand a chance to be in the national team,” he said. Several local clubs are expected to attend the cross-country championships, such as Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF), Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS), Correctional, Royal Eswatini Sugar (RES), TZD, and Manzini Athletics club, among others. Cross-country running is a sport where teams and individuals race on open-air courses over natural terrain such as dirt, grass, and trails. The courses can vary significantly, often including hills, flat ground, and obstacles like logs or ditches. Races typically range from 3km to 12km, with 5km being common for high school events and 8km or 10km for collegiate competitions.



# SBS Netball league takes one one-week break

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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THE Swaziland Building Society E15 0000 netball league will take a one-week break this weekend. This is to give way to the national teams’ preparation for the 2025 netball national cup, which will take place in December, Malawi. Eswatini National Netball Association Secretary Nkabindze Shabalala confirmed the latest updates when contacted. “The league will take a one-week break to give the national team a break in preparation for the African Cup,” he said. The men’s national team last reached the finals of the previous edition of the annual international cup, which was held in Namibia. The senior female and Under

20 teams are both competing in the integrated national league. The female national side is in preparation for the annual international cup. The Women Under 20 team is yet to feature in the integrated league, which is part of their preparations for the 2026 Region V Youth Games. Shabalala applauded the new league format. “We are happy with the kick-off of the upgraded national league and believe the concept will improve the sport. This will further spearhead preparations for the women’s national team and Women Under 20 team,” he said. Senior female team players will compete for their respective clubs on a weekly basis before playing for the national team later in the day under the new format.

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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THE Matsapha police Academy will be the place to be on Saturday for volleyball fanatics. The Sandza construction B Division league will be in full swing under the auspices of the Eswatini National Volleyball Association (ENVA). The action will see Mshinande take on Royal Sugar Eswatini, and the Sugar belt side will also take on Sithobela. Other matches will see Sithobela take on Tigers as part of the series fixtures. ENVA vice Secretary Philile Lokotfwako said preparations for the league are proceeding smoothly. “We will be having multiple fixtures of the Sandza Construction B Division league. We urge fans to attend the games in numbers and fans should behave themselves to avoid tainting the image of the sport,” she said. Elite volleyball teams will compete in the 2025 Zone VI club championships set to take place in December at Polokwane.

# Sandza Volleyball B continues at Police Academy



| The full fixture |    |            |
|------------------|----|------------|
| Mshinande        | vs | RES        |
| Sithobela        | vs | RES        |
| Mshinande        | vs | Mvutshini  |
| Tigers           | vs | Sithobela  |
| Mvutshini        | vs | Villa Park |
| Villa Park       | vs | Tigers     |

▲ Local teams in action under the Sandza Construction volleyball league.



By Chris Dlamini

# Insingizi must fight on!

THE odds were already heavily against Eswatini’s TotalEnergies CAF Champions League 2025/26 representatives Nsingizini Hotspurs after they blew their first leg game, losing 3-0 at Somhlolo National Stadium, Lobamba on Sunday, October 19, just under a week ago.

Insingizi Yezulu, as Nsingizini fondly goes, now has the near-impossible task to overturn this margin by winning 4-0.

We look at the second leg fixture based on what we saw in the first leg. What is it that Nsingizini needs to get done, especially with news their rivals have sold out the match set for their 60 000-seater Benjamin Mkapa Stadium?

### HAVE POSITIVE MENTALITY

- It will be important for the players to remain focussed, disregard any negative talk, and have a positive mindset.
- True, they lost 3-0 at home, but it is only part of the game, which is why Nsingizini can not go there just for formality - the fight goes on.
- They need to be mentally strong to withstand the home crowd, play their game, and give Simba SC a good run for their money.

### THE COACH’S ROLE

- It is the technical bench’s job to motivate the players - a very difficult one given the 3-0 setback. However, Mandla Qhogi, as the head coach, should find a way to prepare the players psychologically.
- They cannot travel with a squad that has already lost and knocked out of the competition when the fight is still on.

### SUBSTITUTIONS:

- From the first leg point of view, the coach was partly blamed in some sectors for his decisions when he made his substitutions. He tempered with the defence when it had stood its ground in the first half. If they get this right, then they can do better.

### TAKE GAME TO SIMBA SC

- They are 3-0 down, but football is a game of surprises. If they keep their heads high and



▲ Simba SC supporters in jovial mood.



▲ Insingizi Yezulu, as Nsingizini fondly goes, now has the near-impossible task to overturn this margin by winning 4-0.



► Kwakhe Thwala in a tussle for the ball with a Simba SC player.



▲ Action during the first leg.



# Let's conquer AS Maniema – Natcom

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela  
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ROYAL Leopard president Vusi Manoma Masango has implored the team to make the country proud by advancing to the group stages of the CAF Confederation Cup.

The president said this ahead of the second preliminary round clash against the Congolese side on Saturday at Somhlolo National Stadium.

“I am confident that the team will do well in the return leg by using the home ground advantage to advance to the next round. We believe the boys will do the job inside the field of play,” he said.

“I won’t sit on the bench during the return leg due to suspension. I have faith in my technical bench that they will do the job diligently in my absence,” he said.

The Ingwenyama Cup champions need a goalless draw to advance to the group stages following the 1-all draw during the first leg encounter.

The police side stands to pocket over E7 million if they reach the group stages of the continent’s second premier club competition. They last achieved the same feat during the 2022 edition.

Leopard will be without the services of head coach Edwin Matsebula during the return leg as he will be serving a one match suspension.

The former National Under 17 mentor is serving a one-match suspension following



▲ Royal Leopard players celebrating a goal in this undated picture.

his red card during the first leg match played on October 18, 2025, in Kinshasa.

Leopard knocked out Namibian side Young African in the preliminary round.

The blue and white have further sealed a three-year technical sponsorship deal with Italian sportswear company Primo.

The sponsorship includes three sets of kits, tracksuits, bibs and replica kits for supporters.

‘Ingwemabalabala’ has become the fifth local side to partner with Primo after Nsin-gizini Hotspurs, Mbabane Swallows, Young Buffaloes, and Ubombo Sugar.



▲ Royal Leopard president Vusi Manoma Masango..

## ‘Figa’ reunites with ex-Richard Bay coach

ESWATINI international striker Justice Figueiredo has reunited with former Richards Bay coach Sifiso ‘Kanu’ Vilakazi at Chippa United.

This follows the appointment of Vilakazi as the new head coach for the Gqeberha based side following the exit of Belgian coach Luc Eymael.

Figueiredo and Vilakazi worked together at Richards Bay two seasons ago before his move to the ‘Chilli Boys’ this season.

Chippa United confirmed the technical changes through a press statement.

“The Club extends its sincere gratitude to Coach Eymael for his contribution and professionalism during his time with us, and we wish him the very best in his future endeavours. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Kanu Vilakazi as the new Head Coach of the team. Coach Vilakazi returns with a clear understanding of the Club’s culture, values, and ambitions. His experience and commitment to our philosophy make him well-positioned to lead the team into the next chapter of our Betway Premiership League campaign,” the club said.

The club further thanked its supporters for their continued support.

“We take this opportunity



▲ Eswatini international striker Justice Figueiredo.

to thank our loyal supporters for their continued belief and encouragement during these difficult times. We promise we will bounce back and go back to being a strong and competitive Chilli Boys side,” the club said.

Figueiredo recently featured for Sihlangu in the last two FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Angola and Cape Verde under the guidance of newly appointed interim coach Sifiso ‘Nuro’ Ntibanane.

He netted a brace during the 2-2 home draw against Angola at Somhlolo National Stadium.

## ‘Age-cheating, muti bad for schools soccer’

By Chris Dlamini

AS excellence in this year’s KFC/Scara Thindwa Foundation Schools Soccer Tournament was rewarded on Thursday, age-cheating and using charms (muti) was lamented.

Several schools got their prizes, mainly soccer equipment like training gear, tracksuits, soccer balls, corner flags, and playing kits, among others.

However, without taking the lime-light from the winking schools, the country’s best soccer player and legend, Absalom ‘Scara’ Thindwa decried the fact that some schools were age-cheating and using muti or juju, which a Ministry of Education representative termed charms.

“When we established the Scara Thindwa Soccer Foundation, our goal was clear, to give young people access to structured opportunities that help them grow not only as players but as responsible citizens and leaders.

“There is only big concern, and that is age-cheating and the use of muti (juju) in development, which is taking us back, yet we are about having the right age groups playing. Give us the right children for each age group and promote training, not any other stuff,” Thindwa appealed.

He said every youngster wanted to be like Cristiano Ronaldo, who is a billionaire.



▲ Eswatini legend Absalom ‘Scara’ Thindwa.

“Don’t forget that he trains, loves what he does, looks after his body, and has someone who cools for him, while he doesn’t eat anyhow, and anything,” he said.

He encouraged the schools, particularly the sports teachers, to stick to the vision of the Foundation and KFC to unearth legendary talent through the right and structured environment.

He emphasised training, saying he did not just become who he is but trained on his own and without soccer boots, always practising how to score goals.

“Our mission is to ensure that football in schools becomes a vehicle for character building, academic discipline, and national pride,” he said before congratulating the winning schools in the under-13, 15, and 17s categories.

The schools will be listed at the end of the article. Meanwhile, Eswatini Schools Sports Association

(ESSA) President Zakhele Myeni assured Thindwa, the Foundation Board, and sponsor KFC Eswatini that they also noted the challenge of age-cheating and the usage of foreign means to aid by schools to aid their chances of winning in games.

“It’s a big challenge, but we will fight it next year by all means possible. I don’t see why we should apply such practices when it has not helped our national team Sihlangu perform well and reach the World Cup,” he said.

He said what was important was developing the right age groups as per the three divisions in the KFC/Scara Tournament and further having trained teachers for the task. Myeni also congratulated the winning schools, which received prizes in the form of soccer development-related equipment. The awards ceremony took place at Alliance Foods in Matsapha.

**Winning Schools:**

**Under-17 Girls**

- 1. Nceka High School** - Branded sports tracksuits and trading kit, soccer balls, coaching board, stalom poles, target poles, soccer boots, goalkeeper ball deflectors, goalkeeper gloves, agility ladder, hurdles and set of agility rings.
- 2. MDS High School** - Hurdles, knee caps, sheen pads, branded school bags, agility training set, and mini goal post.
- 3. Ngwane Park High** - Hurdles, knee caps, sheen pads, branded school bags, agility training set, and mini goal post.





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Friday 24  
October, 2025

SOMHLOLO NATIONAL STADIUM

**Eswatini  
Daily News**

**Sport**

ROYAL LEOPARD

VS

AS MANIEMA F.C.

**NATCOM TELLS HIS CHARGES:**

**‘Let’s conquer  
AS Maniema’**



... Ahead of an epoch-making clash, Royal Leopard President, Vusi Manoma Masango implores his troops to finish the job at home and qualify for the CAF Confederation Cup Group stages. **P23**