

Home Affairs drives digital transformation

Page 3



Eswatini benefits E39mln from electricity transmission line

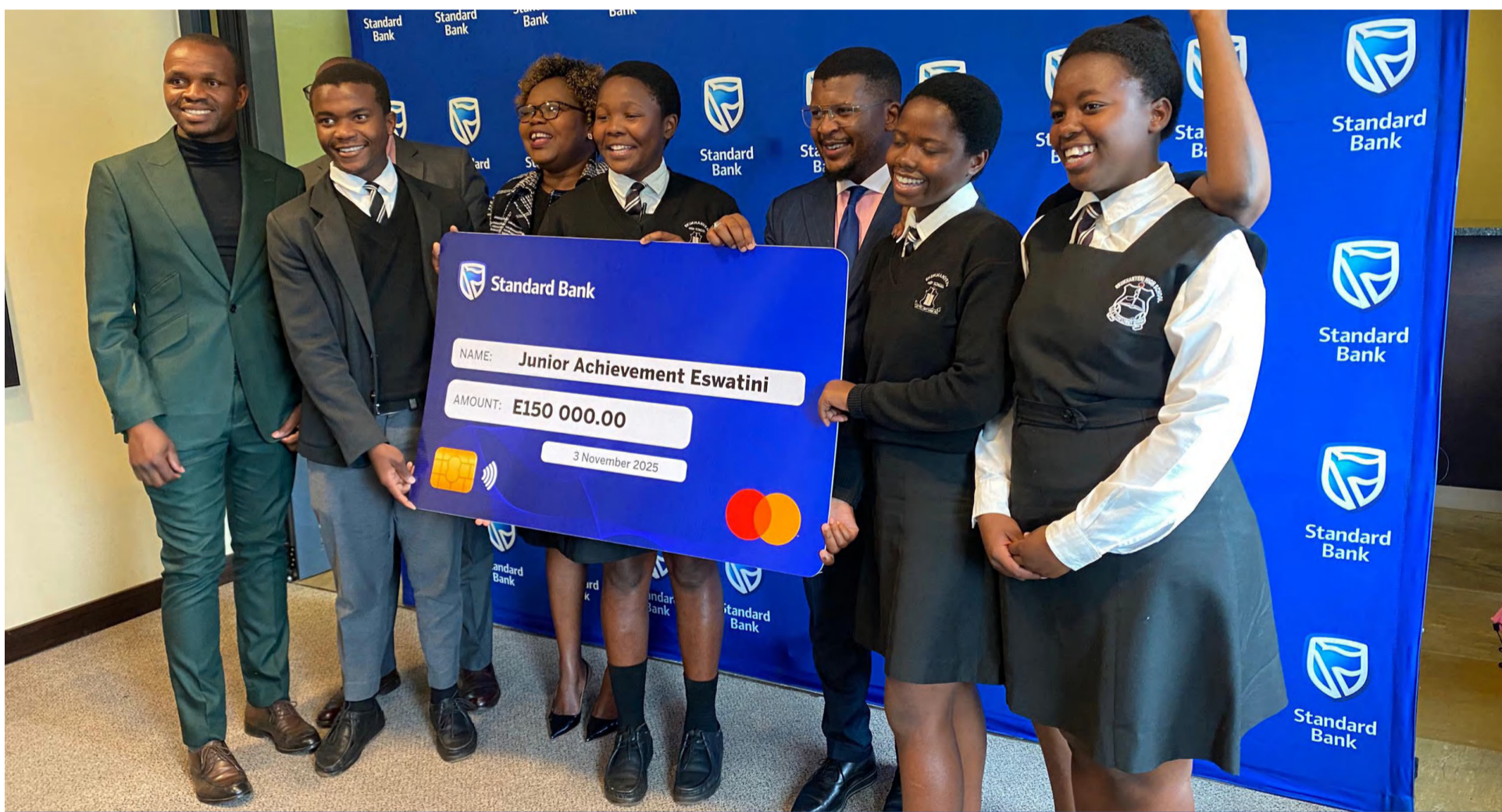
Page 2

Teen disappears with E20 000 of stokvel funds

By Delisa Magagula

A 17-year-old girl from Ezulwini Gelekezeni has allegedly disappeared with E20 000 belonging to her aunt's two local stokvel groups. The disappearance of the teenager has sparked concern within the community. The incident comes at a time when families are preparing for the festive season, a period during which stokvel contributions are often critical to households' year-end spending.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2



Standard Bank commits E368 600 to drive dignity, economic progress Page 4

▲ The Junior Achievement Team receiving their E150 000 cheque from Standard Bank.



A Rubicon Media Group publication

Build on SNL when you earn E3000 – E8000 monthly with Sicalo Home

Apply today

Call 8006100

Help Changes Everything

Powered by FNB Umkhaya Home Loan

First National Bank of Eswatini Limited, Company Reg. No:24/1988 - A financial Institution licensed under the Financial Institutions Act of 2005, and an Insurance Services Provider under the Insurance Act of 2005.



By Delisa Magagula

Teen disappears with E20 000 of stokvel funds

A 17-year-old girl from Ezulwini Gelekececi has allegedly disappeared with E20 000 belonging to her aunt's two local stokvel groups.

The disappearance of the teenager has sparked concern within the community. The incident comes at a time when families are preparing for the festive season, a period during which stokvel contributions are often critical to households' year-end spending.

The girl, who recently finished her Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education (EGCSE) examinations at a local high school in Ezulwini, is said to have left home on Friday evening. According to community members, she was last seen at Ka Mchosa, a popular local bar, wearing grey sweatpants and black sneakers.

Eyewitnesses report that she was in the company of a 35-year-old kombi conductor who is well-known in the Ezulwini area.

The girl resides with her maternal aunt, as her parents are reportedly not present in her life. The aunt, who was still shaken during the interview, has been managing contributions for two stokvel groups in Lobamba.

She said that each group has been collecting approximately E1,200 per month since January 2025, with one payout expected next week and the other at the end of November. The aunt estimates that the girl left with between E15,000 and E20,000, representing the consolidated contributions.

"I was preparing for the next payout, and I realised the money was missing. I don't want to rush into reporting her missing because I still hope she will come back and explain herself. I also want her to return the money before any further steps are taken," said the aunt.

While the aunt has not yet approached the authorities regarding her niece's disappearance, Deputy Chief Information and Communications Officer Assistant Inspector Nosipho Mnguni urged the family to formally open a missing person case.

She also advised that a separate investigation be opened regarding the missing funds, noting the importance of adhering to the SODV Act, which prohibits sexual relationships with individuals under 18 who cannot legally consent.

"The police encourage families to report both missing persons and suspected financial misconduct immediately. This ensures that investigations can be conducted appropriately and that the rights of all parties involved are protected," said Mnguni.



▲ The girl left with between E15,000 and E20,000 of consolidated contributions as members were preparing for a payout.

Efforts to reach the kombi conductor for comment yielded a denial of any involvement with the girl. Speaking at a nearby car wash, the conductor said he was at the wrong place and seemingly at the wrong time.

"I did not spend time with her on Friday or Saturday, and I was not involved in any wrongdoing. We happened to be in the same area, but nothing more," said the conductor.

Meanwhile, community members who frequent Ka Mchosa bar also provided statements regarding the incident. The bar's management said they did not sell alcohol to the girl, acknowledging her presence at the venue but stressing that she was not served alcoholic beverages. "We cannot confirm any transactions with her here. She was around, but we do not serve alcohol to minors," a staff member stated.

Locals who reportedly saw the girl described her as appearing relaxed, though they said she was in a small group of peers who are not well-regarded in the community. "She was just hanging out, laughing with friends, but we were surprised because we knew she had exams and commitments," one community member said.

Another added, it was unusual for someone her age to be out at a bar at that hour, and people were talking about her being with the kombi driver. The incident has sparked broader concern among residents, particularly because of the amount of money

involved and the girl's age. Some community members went as far as to suggest that the kombi conductor might have strategically familiarised himself with the girl, intending to steal the stokvel money using her.

"This is a messy situation. We need to get to the bottom of this because the girl could be dead right now. There is also a lot of money involved here, Kumatima Mbamba," said a senior community member. Worth noting, stokvels are an important financial safety net for many families in the area, and the loss of contributions threatens both immediate household planning and trust within the community.

"People work hard to contribute to these groups, and losing money like this can be very damaging. We hope the girl comes back and that the situation is resolved quickly," said a Lobamba resident who asked not to be named. The aunt expressed her distress at the turn of events but emphasised that she is still hopeful.

"I raised her like my own child, and I know that teenagers can make mistakes. I am giving her the chance to come home and account for herself. I want her to understand the seriousness of what she has done without escalating matters unnecessarily," she said.

Police have reiterated the importance of involving authorities in situations involving minors, both to safeguard the welfare of the child and to ensure that financial misconduct

is properly investigated. Inspector Mnguni also highlighted that the SODV Act serves as a protective measure, noting that any relationship between the girl and the kombi conductor would be illegal due to her inability to consent.

The police have advised residents to report any sightings of the girl and to provide information discreetly to prevent complicating the investigation. "Even small details, such as the colour of clothing or the location of last sighting, can help in locating a missing minor and recovering lost property," Inspector Mnguni said.

Several community members confirmed seeing the girl in grey sweats and black sneakers during the evening, though reports vary regarding whether she was drinking or in possession of the stokvel money.

"She looked casual, like any teenager would dress, but we know now that the money was missing. We can only hope she comes back and clarifies what happened," one witness said.

As of publication, the girl remains unaccounted for, and the stokvel funds have not been recovered. The aunt continues to weigh her options, balancing concern for the girl's welfare with the need to safeguard community resources.

Our sister publication Eswatini Sunday recently reported that a Manzini stokvel chairperson is in trouble for improperly loaning out E40,000 from the group's savings.

The stokvel, which began during Covid-19 was left reeling from the mismanagement of funds. Last week, a South African daily newspaper published that Zandile Nkwanyana was looking forward to a nice Christmas after saving about R10 000 through her stokvel. But her neighbour allegedly stole all her money and left her with nothing.

Stokvels in Eswatini are largely part of the informal economy and there is generally no government interference or regulation on how they are managed. According to research, the lack of formal regulation means that if a member runs away with funds or mismanages money, the recourse for other members is primarily defined by the stokvel's own internal rules and potentially by reporting the theft to the police.

Eswatini benefits E39 million from electricity transmission line

By Thokozani Mazibuko

PARLIAMENT has adopted the Finance Committee's Report on the Mozambique Transmission Company Transit Fee Fund Regulations, 2025, paving the way for Eswatini to manage and regulate close to E39 million earned from electricity transmission fees.

The motion was moved by Lobamba Lomdzala MP Marwick T. Khumalo and seconded by Hhukwini MP Alec Lushaba during Tuesday's sitting chaired by Deputy Speaker Jabulani Buycash Mabuza.

E40 million earned from power transmission

Eswatini has, since 2018, been receiving around US\$300,000 (approximately E5.6

million) annually in transit fees for the high-voltage electricity line that passes through the country from Mozambique to South Africa. These fees have accumulated to over E39 million, now held in a special account.

Initially, the revenue was used to service one of Eswatini's foreign loans, but in recent years it has been directed toward maintaining the transmission infrastructure. The new regulations will formalize how the funds are handled and ensure transparency and accountability in their management.

"The fund has grown significantly since its establishment, and it now requires proper regulations to ensure its effective use and governance," said MP Marwick Khumalo while tabling the motion.

"We propose that the funds be moved to the Central Bank of Eswatini. Accessing money from the consolidated fund has proven to be a lengthy and difficult process," he added.



Concerns over fund management

Some MPs, however, raised concerns over moving the money from the Consolidated Fund. Prince Mshengu, contributing to the debate, questioned the decision, warning against potential misuse.

"Why are we removing the money from the Consolidated Fund? We should worry about the possibility of it being used haphazardly. Moving it could cause problems," he said.

Calls to use the money to benefit EmaSwati

Other legislators proposed that the money be redirected to help ordinary citizens through electricity subsidies. Lugongolweni MP Joseph Souza suggested that the fund be transferred to the Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) for public benefit.

"Why not move the money to EEC so that it can be used to subsidize electricity costs?" he asked.

Lobamba MP Masilela supported the idea, emphasizing that the money should directly assist households struggling with rising power prices.

"Electricity is expensive. This money should be used as a subsidy for EmaSwati to benefit. Let's support our people," Masilela urged.

Madlangemphisi MP Asilwi Magagula echoed these sentiments, backing the proposal to channel the fund to EEC.

Home Affairs drives digital transformation

... as E-Visa, E-Permits system nears full roll-out

By **Ncaba Ntshakala**
ncaban@rubiconmedia.group

THE Ministry of Home Affairs is taking major steps to modernise Eswatini's immigration and civil registration landscape, which has been hailed as a new era of technologically driven service delivery set at strengthening national security, efficiency, and public convenience.

The Ministry has accelerated the development of the E-Visa and E-Permits system, a milestone that will significantly transform how citizens, residents, investors, and visitors access immigration services.

In its latest 2025/26 Second Quarter Performance Report, the Ministry confirmed that the digital platform is progressing steadily, noting that testing of the system has already commenced. The report explains that the system has reached an advanced stage of development and has already undergone initial online activation. It states that the digital migration is part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to modernise

internal processes and align Eswatini with global digital trends in immigration management.

According to the report, "the E-Visa and E-Permits system has been activated online for testing, and preparatory work is underway to ensure full functionality before national roll-out." The report further highlights the Ministry's commitment to ensuring that once fully operational, the system will "improve processing timelines, enhance border efficiency, and reduce manual handling of documents by introducing a secure digital platform for visa and permit applications."

The Ministry also noted that preparations for implementation include capacity-building of front-line immigration officers. As stated in the report, training of staff is being undertaken so that "personnel at border posts and head office are adequately equipped to use the system once it becomes functional for public access." This will ensure seamless integration and quality service delivery once the digital system is officially launched.

Moreover, beyond improving the traveller experience, the report emphasises the system's security benefits, noting that digital screening, automated processing, and electronic record-keeping will help "strengthen national



▲ Minister of Home Affairs HRH Princess Lindiwe.

security and reduce opportunities for malpractice associated with manual systems."

This digital transformation is a central pillar in the Ministry's vision of delivering world-class, transparent, and people-centred services. The move to electronic immigration services

places Eswatini among progressive nations using technology to enhance governance, manage population movement effectively, and support economic growth by creating a more investor-friendly, travel-friendly, and efficient immigration framework.

Senate amends nuclear radiation and safety bill, bill No.4 of 2024

By **Thokozani Mazibuko**
thokozanim@rubiconmedia.group

A MOTION without notice raised by Senator Sicelo Dlamini and seconded by Senator Chief Prince Mphatfwa on Tuesday led to a spirited debate in the Senate over the Radiation Amendment Bill, which seeks to tighten national laws governing the control and safe use of radioactive materials.

The Radiation Amendment Bill, tabled for discussion without prior notice, proposes changes to several clauses in the Radiation Protection Act of 2017, with the aim of strengthening regulatory oversight, aligning local legislation with international safety standards, and enhancing penalties for non-compliance.

Among the amended clauses, Clause 3 now empowers the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy to issue regulations concerning the licensing, importation, and transport of radioactive materials, in consultation with the Radiation Protection Board. This provision expands ministerial authority and establishes clearer lines of accountability.

Clause 5 has been revised to require all institutions using radiation including hospitals, laboratories, and industrial operators to register their equipment and radiation sources annually, rather than once every three years as previously required. The amendment is intended to improve record accuracy and promote continuous monitoring.

Clause 8 introduces stiffer penalties for unauthorized possession or disposal of radioactive substances, increasing fines from E50,000 to E250,000, and imprisonment terms from two to five years. Lawmakers said the tougher sanctions reflect the growing risks associated with radiation misuse and improper handling.

In motivating the motion, Senator Sicelo Dlamini said the amendments were "long overdue" and necessary to ensure Eswatini



▲ Minister of Tourism Honourable Jane Mkhonta-Simelane.

remains compliant with international radiation safety conventions.

"The amendments will enhance national capacity to protect both human life and the environment from the dangers of radiation exposure," he said.

Seconding the motion, Chief Prince Mphatfwa stressed the importance of safeguarding the country's medical and industrial facilities where radiation is commonly used.

"We cannot afford to be reactive when it comes to radiation safety. Updating our legal framework is a matter of national health security," he stated.

Other senators echoed similar sentiments, welcoming the motion and calling for adequate funding to support the Radiation Protection Board's enforcement and public education activities.

The Senate resolved that the amended bill be referred to the Portfolio Committee on Natural Resources and Energy for detailed scrutiny before its next reading.

The debate highlighted the legislature's commitment to strengthening public safety and environmental protection measures as Eswatini continues to modernize its industrial and medical sectors.



▲ Senator Sicelo Dlamini who moved for the adoption.



Christmas came early this year

Win an iPhone 17 Pro Max!

Load E100 or more to enter draw.

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.eswatini-mobile.co.sz

Standard Bank commits E368 600

... to drive dignity, economic progress

By Delisa Magagula
and Gift Nkabinde

STANDARD BANK Eswatini has decisively amplified its Corporate Social Investment (CSI) commitment, announcing a combined financial injection of E368,600.00 into two key national development areas.

The investment targets two cornerstone organisations, the BAWSS Foundation and Junior Achievement (JA) Eswatini, reflecting the bank's foundational purpose.

This substantial funding allocation, unveiled during a handover event held at the Bank's Headquarters boardroom on Monday underscores a strategic vision that links essential human needs with the cultivation of future economic leaders.

During the handover, a major portion of the funding, E218,600.00, was dedicated to tackling the pervasive and often invisible challenge of period poverty that acts as a significant barrier to education across the kingdom.

This investment facilitated the provision of 1,000 Dignity Packs through a partnership with the BAWSS Foundation, a dedicated non-profit focused on supporting under-resourced high school girls.

Bongiwe Hlophe, Head of People and Culture at Standard Bank Eswatini, conveyed the gravity of the issue and the profound simplicity of the solution during her address at the handover.

"Today we hand over 1,000 dignity packs to under-resourced high school girls. Each pack is simple in form sanitary pads, soap, deodorant, and essentials for menstrual hygiene but profound in impact. They help keep a girl in school, protect her dignity, and signal to her that this community believes in her potential," said Hlophe.

Hlophe elaborated on the devastating cost of inaction, noting that period poverty forces girls to miss valuable classroom time, not because of a lack of ambition, but due to a lack of basic, affordable products and hygienic facilities.

She referenced global data points, observing that roughly one in ten school-age girls in Africa is absent from school during their menstruation. She said this absenteeism translates directly into lost lessons, lost confidence, and, too often, lost opportunities a cycle that hinders personal and national progress.

"We know this problem is preventable, dignity is not abstract. Dignity is a girl staying in class because she has what she needs. It's her raising her hand without fear that a stain will betray her. It's staying engaged in sports, science labs, debates, and leadership roles throughout the month. It's the quiet confidence of coming to school prepared, every day," she said.

Meanwhile Anele Shabangu, Founder of the BAWSS Foundation, emotionally accepted the donation, underscoring the critical role such a large-scale, funded project plays in their mission.

"Standard Bank has invested in self-worth, for a girl struggling with poverty, her period becomes a monthly source of anxiety and interruption. This partnership means we can reach girls deep within our communities who have limited access to appropriate products and safe washing facilities, ensuring they can manage their periods with dignity. This act, in turn, restores momentum to a girl's education journey," said Shabangu.

Meanwhile complementing the foundational support provided to young women, the second pillar of the bank's investment was a significant

grant of E150,000.00 to Junior Achievement (JA) Eswatini.

This funding is strategically allocated to strengthen JA's programmes, which focus on cultivating crucial entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy among the country's youth.

Mlamuli Hlatjwako, Head of Business Banking at Standard Bank Eswatini, provided the business case for this development-focused investment, drawing a direct line between youth empowerment and the nation's financial vitality.

"At Standard Bank, our purpose Eswatini as our home, we drive her growth. Driving Eswatini's growth means investing in young people so they can learn, lead, and participate fully in the economy," Hlatjwako asserted.

He emphasised that the bank's support goes beyond capital, including mentorship and skills programmes, because true empowerment is about providing the tools, knowledge, and opportunities that unlock potential.

Hlatjwako stressed that the challenges facing the youth unemployment rate demand proactive measures.

"We know the problem is complex, however, by partnering with organisations like Junior Achievement, we are giving young Swati the practical skills necessary to be job creators, not just job seekers. This is where sustainable economic acceleration begins," he said.

Receiving the cheque on behalf of the foundation was Nomusa Mamba, the Acting Executive Director of the JA Eswatini Foundation. Mamba detailed how the bank's contribution would be leveraged to scale their programs across more schools.

"This generous commitment from Standard Bank allows us to significantly broaden our reach, providing our students with crucial exposure to financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurial mentorship," Mamba explained.

"We are preparing our youth to navigate a complex, modern economy. The bank's commitment to providing this financial stability means we can focus on delivering high-quality, impactful curriculum that aligns directly with national development objectives," she added.

Mamba also linked the JA intervention to the dignity initiative, noting that when youth are equipped with economic skills, they gain financial dignity and independence.

"When we invest in their education and their economic futures, we accelerate the progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4 and SDG 5. This is an investment that pays dividends for the entire nation," she said.

Worth mentioning, this dual commitment of E368,600.00 is not an isolated event, but a clear continuation of Standard Bank Eswatini's long-standing, multi-faceted CSI policy.

The bank has historically maintained a significant focus on holistic community support across education, health, and arts.

For instance, Standard Bank's backing of the arts, particularly through its sponsorship of the Swaziland National Choral Music Association (SNCMA), is an engagement that spans over two decades, showing a cumulative contribution of over E1.5 million to preserving and advancing the country's cultural heritage

In addressing the professional needs of young graduates, the bank has committed E742,000 in a recent period to its Graduate Trainee and Internship Programmes, offering essential pathways into the formal sector.

Furthermore, the bank has allocated E150,000 to the National End Malaria Fund, underscoring that health and wellness are inseparable from development.



▲ Standard Bank pumped in E150 000 to Junior Achievement.



▲ Ekukhanyeni High School learners with their gift bags.



▲ Anele Shabangu and Bongiwe Hlophe.



▲ Standard Bank head of business banking Mlamuli Mbukeni Hlatshwayo



Southern Africa's Trade Summit to unlock AfCFTA potential

Stories by Delisa Magagula

THE 31st meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE) for Southern Africa took place in a hybrid format last week.

The Summit took place on October 29-31, 2025 in Ezulwini, under the theme 'Unlocking African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)'s Potential: Building Value Chains and Overcoming Barriers to Trade in Southern Africa.'

Eswatini chaired the session, with Neal Rijkenberg, Minister for Finance, delivering the keynote address. The meeting's agenda focused on three major areas, strengthening regional macroeconomic stability for sustainable growth and employment, leveraging AfCFTA to build value chains and re-



▲ The Southern African Development Community delegates.

move trade barriers; and promoting green value chains, including optimal exploitation of critical minerals to support industrialisation and socio-economic development in Southern Africa. In his remarks, Minister Rijkenberg emphasised the need for decisive action, public-private partnership, and resource mobilisation. He highlighted AfCFTA as an opportunity for Southern Africa to move beyond commodity exports and build

interconnected value chains in sectors such as batteries, agro-processing, and leather.

He also proposed a 'Right of Supply' mechanism to encourage governments to source selected products continent-wide, stimulating regional specialisation and demand.

ECA's Kamwendo highlighted the importance of inclusive industrialisation, noting that high youth unemployment remains a serious challenge in the region. She urged

member states to commit to a few high-priority actions and track progress over time.

"The key recommendations emerging from the meeting call on regional economic communities to formulate a climate-resilient trade framework integrating climate adaptation into national AfCFTA strategies develop guidelines for climate-resilient transport, storage," said the Minister.

Meanwhile, delegates also stressed the need to mobilise financing, harmonise customs and standards, digitise trade procedures, and strengthen regional value chains.

As host, Eswatini highlighted its role as a regional hub for advancing trade integration.

The meeting concluded with a call for bold action and a commitment from delegates to return with concrete implementation plans.

"Success will depend on coordination across borders and mobilisation of public and private resources, setting the stage for a transformative AfCFTA era in Southern Africa," said the Minister.

Foot-and-Mouth disease outbreak deepens

THE livestock sector in Eswatini is under pressure as outbreaks of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) spread across the country.

Recent reports documented suspected outbreaks and cattle deaths in Malindza, Mpaka, and Sikhuphe.

Earlier in 2025, members of the House of Assembly raised concerns about an impasse within the Department of Livestock and Veterinary Services (DLVS) in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Worth noting the latest outbreak comes just two months after foot and mouth disease was confirmed in the Lubombo region.

Since the first reported case on May 12 at the Sikhwebezi dip tank at Mkhwakweni, Shiselweni, the disease has spread rapidly across multiple dip tanks in affected zones. Believed to have originated from South Africa, the initial case prompted swift containment measures, including movement restrictions and mass vaccination efforts.

Farmers at Lubilweni, Luhwahweni, Makhovini, Mpaka, Maphatsindvuku, Sikhuphe, Lubhuku, and across parts of the Lubombo region are sounding the alarm over a surge in suspected FMD cases. This follows earlier warnings from Lubulini and Big-Bend, where cattle began showing clinical signs

consistent with the virus.

Sipho Magagula, a farmer from Mpaka, described a worsening situation where he said they keep losing their cattle that showed clear signs of foot and mouth.

"Last week, a farmer lost four cattle that showed clear signs of foot and mouth. Another from the Sikhuphe dip tank also reported losing a cow with similar symptoms. Several deaths have occurred under mysterious circumstances, deepening fears of a fast-spreading outbreak," said Magagula.

Meanwhile, a parliamentary Select Committee found that staffing shortages and resignations within the department were hampering the response to the FMD outbreak.

The committee, led by MP Sicelo Prince Dlamini, called on the Ministry of Agriculture to provide a comprehensive report on the outbreak, including the status of veterinary services and resources deployed.

Legislators also requested improved working conditions for cordon and border guards and tighter controls on livestock movements.

The outbreak is considered serious as FMD was last detected in May 2025 at the Sikhwebezi dip tank in Shiselweni. Since then, the disease has reportedly spread rapidly, disrupting exports and threatening the

livelihoods of communal and commercial farmers.

In a media briefing, Principal Secretary Sydney Simelane urged farmers to rely on official vaccination campaigns and warned against using private doses. He confirmed that 60 cordon guards had been hired to reinforce border posts and internal controls.

The government has committed E38 million to rebuild frontier infrastructure to tighten livestock movement controls and prevent cross-border transmission.

Parliament also highlighted weaknesses, such as intermittent enforcement of movement restrictions and temporary closure of abattoirs, which were undermining biosecurity.

Farmers reported that more than ten dip tanks and farms were under quarantine, with over 100 suspected cases across affected areas. Delayed public disclosure and collapsed cattle markets have increased frustration among livestock owners.

To address these concerns, the Agriculture Committee now receives weekly briefings on vaccination progress, herd traceability, export market status, and potential compensation for farmers.

Officials emphasise that while FMD does not pose a risk to humans, its economic im-



▲ A cow with FMD in Mpaka.

pact is severe, including reduced productivity, lost revenue, and potential long-term damage to the livestock industry.

The UK government's veterinary agency has restricted meat imports from Eswatini following notification of the outbreak, highlighting the urgent need to restore confidence in the country's veterinary controls.

Parliament's oversight signals that the outbreak is a national priority. Effective containment measures, vaccination campaigns, and movement controls will determine the recovery of Eswatini's livestock sector and its ability to regain access to international markets.

Farmers and legislators will be closely monitoring the Ministry's performance in the coming weeks, with livelihoods and national revenue at stake.

Stories by Thokozani Mazibuko

Man struck dead by lightning in Tholulwazi

A 30-year-old man from Tholulwazi area near Hlathikhulu tragically lost his life after being struck by lightning on Saturday evening.

According to a statement issued by the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, the fatal incident occurred on 1 November 2025 at around 6:00 p.m. while the man was outdoors during a thunderstorm.

“The 30-year-old man was struck by lightning while at Tholulwazi area. He sustained severe burn injuries and was certified dead at the scene,” Mnguni said.

Police officers and emergency personnel attended the scene shortly after the incident was reported. The body was later conveyed to the Hlathikhulu Government Hospital mortuary for post-mortem examination.

Mnguni extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and urged the public to exercise extreme caution during the rainy season.

“We are now in the rainy period, which comes with an increased risk of lightning strikes. Members of the public are advised to remain indoors during thunderstorms and to avoid open spaces,” she emphasized.

Residents in Tholulwazi described the de-



ceased as a humble and hardworking community member whose sudden death has left many in shock.

The Eswatini Meteorological Service has also cautioned that more thunderstorms are expected across the country in the coming

weeks, particularly in the Shiselweni and Lubombo regions.

How to Protect Yourself from Lightning

To minimize the risk of being struck by lightning, the public is urged to observe the following safety precautions:

- **Stay Indoors:** When you hear thunder, immediately seek shelter in a house or sturdy building. Avoid huts, sheds, or under trees.
- **Avoid Open Areas:** Do not stand in open fields, near water bodies, or on hilltops during thunderstorms.
- **Keep Away from Electrical Appliances:** Unplug appliances and avoid touching electrical equipment, metal doors, or water taps.
- **Do Not Take Shelter Under Trees:** Trees attract lightning standing beneath one can be fatal.
- **If Caught Outdoors:** Crouch low to the ground with your feet close together, and avoid lying flat.
- **Avoid Using Phones:** Refrain from using wired phones or charging devices during lightning storms.

The Eswatini Royal Police Service continues to remind the public that safety awareness and caution can save lives during severe weather conditions.



▲ Deputy PICO Nosipho Mnguni.

23yr old brutally killed at Matfuntini

TRAGEDY struck the Matfuntini community in the Pigg’s Peak area after a 23-year-old man was brutally assaulted and killed in what police described as a violent attack involving stones and sticks.

According to a statement issued by the Deputy Police Information and Communication Officer, Assistant Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni, the incident occurred on 1 October 2025 at around 7:30 p.m.

The victim, whose identity has not yet been officially released pending notification of next of kin, was attacked by three teenagers, all aged 17, while at Matfuntini.

“The 23-year-old male was assaulted with a stone and sticks on the head and sustained severe injuries. He was later certified dead,” Mnguni said.

Police swiftly launched investigations which led to the arrest of the three suspects, all residents of the same area. They

have since been charged with murder and are expected to appear before the Pigg’s Peak Magistrates Court soon.

The motive behind the attack is still under investigation, but police have not ruled out the possibility of a personal dispute or gang-related violence.

Assistant Superintendent Mnguni strongly condemned the act, describing it as “a senseless loss of life” and urged communities to refrain from taking the law into their own hands.

“We appeal to members of the public, especially the youth, to resolve conflicts peacefully. Violence only brings grief to families and communities,” she said.

The deceased’s death has sent shockwaves through Matfuntini, with residents expressing deep sadness over the growing trend of violent crimes involving young people.

Police investigations continue, and the suspects remain in custody pending their court appearance.

RDF transforms lives of women in Luhlokohla

IN a remarkable demonstration of empowerment through local development initiatives, more than ten women from Luhlokohla at Ntabamhloshana under the Mafutseni Inkhundla have seen their lives transformed through the Rural Development Fund (RDF).

According to the bucophu of Luhlokohla, Bhekuyise Tsabedze, the RDF has lived up to its purpose of improving the lives of Emaswati in rural communities.

“The Rural Development Fund was established to change the fortunes of Emaswati. Over ten women from Luhlokohla have had their lives changed and transformed. Their immediate families and even the whole community will benefit from this development,” Tsabedze. The women’s group received RDF approval and funding amounting to

E1.3 million, which enabled them to purchase two Toyota Quantum minibuses. These vehicles are expected to serve as the cornerstone of their income-generating project, providing reliable public transport services in the area and beyond.

Tsabedze noted that the initiative does not only empower the women financially but also contributes to the broader socio-economic development of the Mafutseni Inkhundla.

“When women are empowered, the whole community grows. This funding will ensure sustainable livelihoods and inspire other groups to take advantage of such government programs,” he added.

RDF, a government-backed initiative, aims to improve rural livelihoods by supporting viable community projects with financial assistance. Since its inception, the fund has become a key instrument in fighting poverty, creating jobs, and

stimulating rural economies across Eswatini.

Residents have applauded the initiative, describing it as a lifeline that will improve transportation access and open business opportunities within the community.

The women’s group expressed gratitude to the government and RDF administrators for believing in their project and providing the resources to turn their dreams into reality.

“We are thankful for this opportunity. The funding has given us dignity and the means to support our families. We promise to make this project a success,” said one of the beneficiaries.

As Eswatini continues to promote inclusive economic growth, projects such as this stand as testament to the transformative power of grassroots development programs.



▲ RDF, a government-backed initiative, aims to improve rural livelihoods by supporting viable community projects with financial assistance.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

ISA to audit Eswatini's energy policies ahead of solar expansion

THE International Solar Alliance (ISA) will conduct a comprehensive review of Eswatini's energy policies as part of a new collaboration to accelerate the country's transition to solar power. The assessment conducted during the 8th Session of the ISA Assembly in New Delhi, India, last week marks the first step toward developing a national Solar Energy Roadmap to guide the systematic roll-out of solar technologies across all sectors of the economy.

Dollar index at three-month high, testing top of recent range

SINGAPORE/LONDON — The dollar hovered at a three-month high against a basket of peers on Monday ahead of economic data this week that will offer only vague clues about the health of the U.S. economy and could reinforce the Federal Reserve's cautious stance. The Fed lowered interest rates by 25 basis points last week, as expected, but Chair Jerome Powell signalled that may be the central bank's last cut this year.

Oil prices steady despite OPEC+ plans to pause output increases

LONDON — Oil prices were little changed despite news that OPEC+ plans to end its supply increases, with the market weighed down by fears of an oil supply glut and weak factory data in Asia. Brent crude futures were down 1 cent, or 0.02%, at \$64.76 a barrel by 1329 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was down 2 cents, or 0.03%, at \$60.96.

Over 10 000 jobs coming

... as Kellogg Tolaram expands local operations

By Delisa Magagula

AN estimated 10,000 jobs are expected to be created in Eswatini by 2030, following major expansion plans by Kellogg Tolaram, a multinational conglomerate that has pledged to increase its industrial footprint in the kingdom.

The projection was reaffirmed during a benchmarking visit to Nigeria by the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Trade, Manqoba Khumalo, and a delegation from the ministry's House of Assembly Portfolio Committee.

The visit focused on learning how Nigeria has successfully managed and grown its Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to attract large-scale investments and create thousands of sustainable jobs.

Kellogg Tolaram one of Eswatini's largest private investors currently operates two major manufacturing facilities in the country, the Lush Hair factory in Ngwenya, which employs over 700 emaSwati, and the Sibebe Kellogg Tolaram noodle plant in Matsapha, which employs an additional 300.

The company has now announced plans to significantly expand its operations, introducing new manufacturing lines and regional supply hubs aimed at serving the broader Southern African market.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade, these expansion efforts are expected to generate up to 10,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities for EmaSwati by the end of the decade.

During their visit, Minister Khumalo and the delegation toured Hypo Homecare Products and Lush Hair manufacturing plants in Lagos, both owned and operated by the Kellogg Tolaram Group.

The companies are leading examples of Nigeria's thriving manufacturing sector, each employing thousands of workers and demonstrating efficient production systems, large-scale distribution networks, and strong export capacity.

Hypo Homecare, one of Nigeria's largest producers of bleach and household cleaning products, shared insights into how a single company can supply millions of homes nationwide while maintaining strict quality standards and competitive pricing.

The Eswatini delegation also visited the Lekki Free Trade Zone, a vibrant industrial hub hosting global companies across various sectors, to observe how the Nigerian government has successfully integrated private investors into a structured SEZ framework.

Minister Khumalo said the benchmarking exercise would help Eswatini strengthen its own industrialisation strategy, especially as the country seeks to attract investors through its Royal Science and Technology Park, the Sikhuphe Industrial Estate, and other designated Special Economic Zones.

"We are learning from Nigeria's experience in managing SEZs to ensure that Eswatini can create an enabling environment for industrial investors. The goal is not only to attract factories but to establish entire value chains that can employ thousands of emaSwati, boost exports, and reduce reliance on imports," he said.



▲ The Portfolio Committee during the Nigeria visit.

During an interview, Khumalo shared that Eswatini is developing a comprehensive incentive package to support the anticipated expansion. This includes tax incentives, capital assistance, and infrastructure support for investors operating within the SEZs.

"By law, qualifying industries in designated zones will be eligible for capital assistance and other financial support measures, which include duty-free importation of raw materials, reduced corporate taxes, and government-facilitated access to industrial land and utilities," said Khumalo.

He further said, such incentives are designed to make Eswatini more competitive in attracting multinational investors like Kellogg Tolaram, which has already demonstrated a long-term commitment to local employment and skills development.

Worth noting in Nigeria, Kellogg Tolaram employs over 20,000 people across its facilities, making it the third-largest employer after the Federal Government and the Dangote Group.

By transferring that industrial expertise to Eswatini, the conglomerate aims to replicate similar large-scale success in the region.

Meanwhile, the planned expansions align with Eswatini's broader Industrialisation Policy, which targets inclusive growth through manufacturing, value addition, and export-driven production.

Minister Khumalo said the government's strategy is to position Eswatini as a regional manufacturing hub for consumer goods, leveraging the country's strategic location within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

"Eswatini has a strong logistical advantage we are centrally located between major trading partners and have access to regional markets of over 300 million consumers. Our partnership with Kellogg Tolaram is proof that Eswatini is ready to become a key manufacturing destination in Southern Africa," he said.

Kellogg Tolaram's representatives have confirmed that the group's expansion plans will include new product lines, such as personal care items, home care products, and packaged food manufacturing.

The company is also exploring the develop-

ment of training programmes and apprenticeship to equip employees with the technical and managerial skills required in modern manufacturing.

Industry observers say that with a population of less than 1.2 million, creating 10,000 new jobs by 2030 could significantly reduce unemployment and stimulate economic growth, particularly for the youth and women.

The visit to the Lekki Free Trade Zone offered the Eswatini delegation an opportunity to witness how effective industrial policy, private-public partnerships, and investor incentives can transform a developing economy.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's SEZ model has attracted billions in investment and continues to be a key driver of the country's non-oil economy.

Portfolio Committee Chairperson Masiphula Mamba, who accompanied the minister, said Eswatini intends to adopt similar policy mechanisms tailored to the local context.

"We have seen first-hand how consistent government support and well-managed zones can create jobs, encourage innovation, and uplift communities," he said.

Committee members Wilton Nkambule, Ndumiso Gadlela, Sibongile Mamba, and Mthayiphi Dlamini from the Department of Industries also took part in the visit, which they described as an eye-opener for understanding how to foster industrial growth through collaboration with private investors.

Eswatini's partnership with Kellogg Tolaram is part of a broader vision under the Eswatini Industrialisation Roadmap 2022-2030, which seeks to promote manufacturing as a central pillar of national development.

The roadmap prioritises job creation, export expansion, and the establishment of resilient value chains within agriculture, textiles, and consumer goods.

If fully implemented, the 10,000-job projection would represent one of the largest private-sector employment drives in Eswatini's history.

Minister Khumalo said their vision is to build a stronger industrial base that creates sustainable jobs for emaSwati.

"Working with experienced partners like Kellogg Tolaram brings us closer to that goal," said Khumalo.

EswatiniBank

FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	46.9066	47.3696
G.B. Pound	22.6731	23.3452
EURO	49.7282	20.3347
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	

By Delisa Magagula

ISA to audit Eswatini's energy policies ahead of solar expansion

THE International Solar Alliance (ISA) will conduct a comprehensive review of Eswatini's energy policies as part of a new collaboration to accelerate the country's transition to solar power.

The assessment conducted during the 8th Session of the ISA Assembly in New Delhi, India, last week marks the first step toward developing a national Solar Energy Roadmap to guide the systematic rollout of solar technologies across all sectors of the economy.

Minister for Natural Resources and Energy Prince Lonkhokhela, who led the Eswatini delegation, confirmed that the ISA had pledged firm support to provide both technical assistance and expert analysis to help shape the country's renewable energy future.

According to the ministry, the audit will examine existing policies, institutional frameworks, and regulatory mechanisms governing energy generation and distribution in Eswatini.

The findings are expected to form the foundation of the upcoming roadmap a detailed blueprint that will outline short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for integrating solar energy into the national grid.

"The ISA's technical team will evaluate where we currently stand and help us determine what practical steps are needed to strengthen our energy systems. This process will ensure that our policies are not only aligned with global best practices but are also realistic and implementable within our national context," said the Minister.

Noteworthy, the International Solar Alliance an intergovernmental organisation jointly launched by India and France to promote solar energy adoption among member states brings together over 120 countries.

It supports capacity building, investment mobilisation, and technology transfer for nations seeking to scale up renewable energy use.

For Eswatini, this collaboration comes at a time when the country is under growing pressure to diversify its energy mix, reduce reliance on imported electricity, and stabilise supply for both households and industries.

Worth mentioning is that the country currently imports the majority of its electricity from South Africa's Eskom and Mozambique's EDM, leaving it vulnerable to regional price fluctuations and load-shedding.

Through the ISA-backed assessment, Eswatini aims to identify gaps that have slowed down renewable energy adoption and address regulatory barriers that limit private sector participation in the energy market.

According to the Minister, the roadmap will then set measurable targets for solar deployment, policy implementation, and investment mobilisation.

Officials say the document will go beyond setting energy generation goals. It will also include strategies for research and innovation, the introduction of new solar technologies, and ways to make solar energy accessible to rural and low-income communities.

Among the key areas expected to feature prominently are photovoltaic (PV) systems for electricity generation, solar heating and cooling, concentrating solar power (CSP), and even solar-based cooking and transport solutions.

The roadmap is also expected to explore potential partnerships for establishing local manufacturing or assembly of solar components to reduce costs and create jobs.

Prince Lonkhokhela described the upcoming roadmap as a transformational plan



▲ Director General of the International Solar Alliance Ashish Khanna meeting Minister of Natural Resources and Energy HRH Prince Lonkhokhela.

that will reshape how Eswatini produces and consumes energy.

"Solar energy is no longer an option it is an imperative with our abundant sunlight, we have an opportunity to build a cleaner, more reliable, and more affordable energy future for our people," he said.

During his visit to India, the minister also met with the ISA President, Pralhad Joshi, who serves as India's Minister of New and Renewable Energy.

Their discussions centred on key areas of cooperation, including investment mobilisation, capacity building, and the development of solar infrastructure.

Joshi expressed strong support for Eswatini's renewable energy ambitions, pledging the Alliance's full assistance in helping the country design and implement its roadmap.

"Eswatini has vast potential to harness solar power. The ISA stands ready to provide all necessary technical support to ensure that the kingdom achieves its energy goals," he said.

Energy experts note that such international partnerships are crucial for small economies that lack the technical expertise and capital required to implement large-scale renewable projects.

By joining hands with the ISA, Eswatini gains access to a global network of solar research institutions, investors, and policy advisors.

The ministry emphasised that the audit will not merely be a technical exercise but will also take into account social and economic realities.

The process will focus on ensuring that the energy transition remains inclusive, affordable, and aligned with the country's broader development agenda.

"This is about building resilience. We are looking at how to ensure that as we move towards solar, no community is left behind



▲ Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Prince Lonkhokhela, who led the Eswatini delegation, confirmed that ISA had pledged firm support to provide both technical assistance and expert analysis to help shape the country's renewable energy future.

especially in rural areas where access to electricity remains limited," he said.

Currently, Eswatini's renewable energy projects are largely at pilot or early development stages, including a few solar mini-grids and independent power producer (IPP) projects.

The forthcoming roadmap is expected to consolidate these efforts into a unified national vision, setting clear priorities for expansion and investment.

The ISA has already supported several African countries in drafting similar frameworks, including Kenya, Rwanda, and Ghana, where the introduction of structured solar policies has led to rapid increases in renewable energy capacity.

For Eswatini, officials believe the roadmap will help attract both domestic and foreign investors to the solar sector by offering policy clarity and demonstrating a long-term commitment to clean energy.

Once the ISA completes its audit and the roadmap is finalised, implementation will be rolled out in phases starting with expanding solar home systems in rural communities and gradually scaling up to larger commercial and industrial projects.

If successfully implemented, the initiative could not only cut Eswatini's dependency on imported electricity but also position the kingdom as a regional example of how small nations can leverage global partnerships to achieve energy security and sustainability.

By Anmol Choubey

Dollar index at three-month high, testing top of recent range

SINGAPORE/LONDON — The dollar hovered at a three-month high against a basket of peers on Monday ahead of economic data this week that will offer only vague clues about the health of the U.S. economy and could reinforce the Federal Reserve's cautious stance.

The Fed lowered interest rates by 25 basis points last week, as expected, but Chair Jerome Powell signalled that may be the central bank's last cut this year, citing the risk of making additional moves without a more robust picture of the economy.

Were it not for the ongoing U.S. government shutdown, data releases scheduled for this week, including U.S. non-farm payrolls, would have helped with that picture.

However, with government releases likely to be delayed again, investors will be left with ADP employment data and ISM PMIs, though it seems unlikely these will move the dial significantly.

A number of Fed bank presidents on Friday aired their discomfort with the decision to ease policy, and traders are now pricing in a roughly 68 per cent chance of a 25 bp cut in December, having seen such a move as highly likely ahead of last week's meeting.

The yen was at 154.1 per dollar, languishing near an 8-1/2-month low, pressured by wide interest rate differentials.

Meanwhile the euro was down 0.16 per cent at \$1.1513, its lowest in three months, and the pound was 0.3 per cent lower at



▲ U.S. dollar banknotes.

\$1.3133.

That left the dollar index, which measures the currency against a basket of six other majors, up 0.16 per cent at 99.89, around its highest since August 1.

The index has traded in a tight range between about 96 and 100 over the last six months.

"All eyes are on whether it can break out

of that range, and if the rebound has legs," said Lee Hardman, senior currency analyst at MUFG, adding that the main driver of the stronger dollar was the hawkish repricing of Fed expectations.

The pound and the yen face their own pressures.

Even though Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda last week sent the strongest

signal yet that a rate hike was possible as soon as December, markets remained underwhelmed by the central bank's gradual approach, particularly given that the Fed has turned more hawkish.

That has piled pressure on the yen, prompting jawboning from Japanese authorities to stem the currency's slide.

The yen is approaching levels at which Japanese authorities intervened in markets in 2022 and 2024 to support the currency.

"The yen could start to see more support as markets get nervous about intervention as we get close to those levels, though I don't think it's enough to change things on its own," said Hardman.

The yen was also pinned near last week's record low against the euro, last trading at 177.4. Sterling has softened as market expectations of another Bank of England rate cut this year increased after softer-than-expected inflation data released last month.

The BoE meets this week, with some analysts predicting a 25 basis point cut, though market pricing only reflects a one in three chance of this occurring.

The Aussie inched up 0.1 per cent to \$0.6554, supported by expectations that the Reserve Bank of Australia will hold rates on Tuesday, following an uncomfortably high reading of core inflation, while the dollar was up 0.34 per cent to 0.8072 Swiss francs, its highest since mid-August. (Reuters)



▲ People walk past an installation depicting a barrel of oil with the logo of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) during the COP29 United Nations climate change conference in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Oil prices steady despite OPEC+ plans to pause output increases

By Shadia Nasralla

LONDON — Oil prices were little changed despite news that OPEC+ plans to end its supply increases, with the market weighed down by fears of an oil supply glut and weak factory data in Asia.

Brent crude futures were down 1 cent, or 0.02%, at \$64.76 a barrel by 1329 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was down 2 cents, or 0.03%, at \$60.96.

The Reuters Power Up newsletter provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, known collectively as OPEC+, agreed on Sunday to raise output by a small 137,000 barrels per day (bpd) in December and to pause increases in the first quarter of next year.

Brent and WTI both fell more than 2% in October, down for a third straight month and hitting a five-month low on October 20.

Last month the International Energy

Agency said the global oil market faces a surplus next year of as much as 4 million bpd. OPEC, meanwhile, expects global oil supply and demand to balance next year.

The halt in quotas for the first quarter of next year does not affect the projected surplus, SEB analysts said in a note.

"But it shows that OPEC+ hasn't forgotten about the price. It still cares about price. It tells us that 2026 won't be a bloodbath or graveyard for oil," they added.

Meanwhile, European oil CEOs at a conference in Abu Dhabi cautioned against being too bearish on oil next year.

RBC said that Russia remains a key supply wild card after U.S. sanctions on Russian producers Rosneft and Lukoil as well as attacks on the country's energy infrastructure resulting from the war in Ukraine.

A Ukrainian drone attack struck Tuapse on Sunday, one of Russia's main Black Sea oil ports, causing a fire and damaging at least one ship.

Headwinds for Asia's big manufacturing hubs persisted in October, business surveys showed on Monday. Asia is the world's biggest oil-consuming region. (Reuters)

Stocks gain on US-China trade truce

LONDON — Global stocks were driven higher on Monday by optimism over a U.S.-China trade truce and surging investment in AI, while the dollar hit three-month highs as expectations for hefty U.S. rate cuts showed signs of waning.

Investors remain focused on developments from last week, including central bank meetings and the U.S.-China agreement on a year-long trade truce, although doubts remain if it will last for the full duration.

In Europe, the broad STOXX 600 share index rallied 0.4 per cent in another heavy week for earnings, while the dollar gained and U.S. stock futures rose 0.3 to 0.5 per cent.

Investors cannot rely on their usual economic touchstone in the first week of the month - the monthly U.S. jobs report - and will have to look instead at private-sector employment and the labour components of surveys of business activity due this week.

"If it weren't for the shutdown, we'd be looking forward to the U.S. jobs report for October on Friday. But given we aren't getting the government data releases, there's likely to be outsize attention on the ADP's report of private payrolls on Wednesday, especially in light of Chair Powell's hawkish press conference last week," said Deutsche Bank strategist Jim Reid.

Time for caution?

The U.S. Federal Reserve last week cut interest rates as expected. But Chair Jerome Powell said another cut in December was "not a foregone conclusion", contrary to investor belief that it was essentially a done deal.

The mood is still buoyant, some analysts believe that a number of other positives, such as the trade truce between Washington



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

and Beijing, may already be in the rear-view mirror.

In Asia, data showed big manufacturing hubs struggled to fire up in October as weak U.S. demand and tariffs under President Donald Trump hit factory orders.

"We advise investors to lock in some gains on the rises and accumulate on the corrections, and rotate into more defensive positioning toward year-end," said BofA strategists.

Hawkish Fedspeak

A clutch of Fed officials on Friday aired their discomfort with the central bank's decision to cut interest rates, even as influential Fed Governor Christopher Waller made the case for more policy easing to shore up a weakening labour market.

Traders are now pricing a 68 per cent chance of a rate cut in December, down from a near certainty last week before the Fed meeting, where it lowered rates by 25 basis points. (Reuters)

Nigeria says US help against Islamist insurgents must respect its sovereignty

NIGERIA said on Sunday it would welcome U.S. help in fighting Islamist insurgents as long as its territorial integrity is respected, responding to threats of military action by President Donald Trump over what he said was the ill treatment of Christians in the West African country.

Trump said on Saturday that he had asked the Defense Department to prepare for possible "fast" military action in Nigeria if Africa's most populous country fails to crack down on the killing of Christians.

"We welcome U.S. assistance as long as it recognises our territorial integrity," Daniel Bwala, an adviser to Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, told Reuters.

But Trump on Sunday told reporters the U.S. military could deploy troops to Nigeria or carry out air strikes to stop what he called the killing of "very large numbers" of Christians there, but gave no further details.

"I envisage a lot of things," Trump said aboard Air Force One, without elaborating.

Bwala sought to play down tensions between the two states, despite Trump calling Nigeria a "disgraced country."

"We don't take it literally, because we know Donald Trump thinks well of Nigeria," Bwala said.

"I am sure by the time these two leaders meet and sit, there would be better outcomes in our joint resolve to fight terrorism," he said.

ISLAMIST INSURGENTS WREAK HAVOC FOR YEARS

Nigeria, a country of more than 200 million people and around 200 ethnic groups, is divided between the largely Muslim north and mostly Christian south.

Islamist insurgents such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province have wrought havoc in the country for more than 15 years, killing thousands of people, but their attacks have been largely confined to the northeast of the country, which is majority Muslim.

While Christians have been killed, the vast majority of the victims have been Muslims, analysts say.

In central Nigeria there have been fre-



quent clashes between mostly Muslim herders and mainly Christian farmers over access to water and pasture, while in the northwest of the country, gunmen routinely attack villages, kidnapping residents for ransom.

Nigeria "does not discriminate against any tribe or religion in the fight against insecurity," Bwala said. "There is no Christian genocide."

VIOLENCE 'DEVASTATES ENTIRE COMMUNITIES'

"Insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa often present their campaigns as anti-Christian, but in practice their violence is indiscriminate and devastates entire communities," said Ladd Serwat, senior Africa analyst at U.S. crisis-monitoring group ACLED.

"Islamist violence is part of the complex

and often overlapping conflict dynamics in the country over political power, land disputes, ethnicity, cult affiliation, and banditry," he said.

ACLED research shows that out of 1,923 attacks on civilians in Nigeria so far this year, the number of those targeting Christians because of their religion stood at 50. Serwat said recent claims circulating among some U.S. right-wing circles that as many as 100,000 Christians had been killed in Nigeria since 2009 are not supported by available data.

NIGERIA REJECTS ALLEGATIONS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Trump's threat of military action came a day after his administration added Nigeria back to a "Countries of Particular Concern" list of nations that the U.S. says have violat-

ed religious freedoms. Other nations on the list include China, Myanmar, North Korea, Russia and Pakistan.

Tinubu, a Muslim from southern Nigeria who is married to a Christian pastor, on Saturday pushed back against accusations of religious intolerance and defended his country's efforts to protect religious freedom.

When making key government and military appointments, Tinubu, like his predecessors, has sought to strike a balance to make sure that Muslims and Christians are represented equally. Last week, Tinubu changed the country's military leadership and appointed a Christian as the new defence chief.

In the capital Abuja, some Christians going to Sunday Mass said they would welcome a U.S. military intervention to protect their community.

STRIKES WOULD TARGET SMALL GROUPS ACROSS WIDE AREA

"I feel if Donald Trump said they want to come in, they should come in and there is nothing wrong with that," said businesswoman Juliet Sur.

Security experts said any U.S. air strikes would most likely seek to target small groups scattered across a very large swathe of territory, a task that could be made more difficult given the U.S. withdrew its forces last year from Niger, which borders Nigeria in the north.

The militant groups move between neighbouring countries Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and the experts said the U.S. may require help from the Nigerian military and government, which Trump threatened to cut off from assistance.

(Reuters)

Red Cross head says 'history repeating' in Sudan after reported killings

THE head of the Red Cross says history is repeating itself in Sudan's Darfur region after reports of mass killings during the fall of the city of al-Fashir to the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary last week.

The RSF's capture of al-Fashir – the Sudanese army's last holdout in Darfur – marked a milestone in Sudan's civil war, giving the paramilitary force de facto control of more than a quarter of the country's territory.

Hundreds of civilians and unarmed fighters may have been killed during the city's fall, the U.N. human rights office said on Friday. Witnesses have described RSF fighters separating men from women and children, with gunshots ringing out afterwards. The RSF denies harming civilians.

CIVILIANS TRAPPED WITHOUT FOOD AND WATER

The situation in Sudan is "horrific," International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Mirjana Spoljaric told Reuters in a weekend interview during a visit to Riyadh.

She said tens of thousands of people had fled al-Fashir after the RSF seized the city and it was likely that tens of thousands more were trapped there without access to food, water or medical assistance.

"It's history repeating, and it becomes worse every time a place is taken over by the other party," she said.

A crackdown on Darfur rebels in the 2000s

led to years of ethnically driven violence that killed hundreds of thousands in what was widely labelled genocide. The RSF has its roots in the "Janjaweed" militias mobilised by the government at the time.

Spoljaric also said the ICRC was "extremely concerned" about reports of a suspected massacre at the Saudi Hospital, the last-known functioning medical facility in al-Fashir, although it could not yet substantiate what happened there.

ICRC staff in the nearby town of Tawila had heard reports that people fleeing were "sometimes collapsing and even dying out of exhaustion or because of their wounds," Spoljaric said, calling the situation "absolutely beyond what we can consider acceptable."

The United States has said the RSF had committed genocide in the Darfur city of Geneina during an earlier stage of the two-and-a-half-year civil war, which the group denies. Rights groups and U.S. officials have also accused the RSF and allied militias of ethnic cleansing in the region.

APPEAL FOR RESTRAINT AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Asked about her messaging to alleged foreign backers of parties to the conflict, Spoljaric said: "Especially those states that have an influence on parties to conflict are under responsibility to do the necessary to restrain them and to make sure that they protect civilian populations."

The United Arab Emirates has been ac-



▲ A general view of people sitting at a camp for displaced families who fled from al-Fashir to Tawila, North Darfur, Sudan.

cus of sending the RSF substantial military support but has repeatedly denied doing so. The rival Port Sudan-based authorities have foreign backers including Egypt and deployed Iranian-made drones to try to turn the tide of the conflict last year.

More than 70,000 people have fled al-Fashir since October 26, according to the International Organisation for Migration, but little is known about the fate of almost 200,000 others thought to have remained there during the 18-month RSF assault and siege of the city.

Spoljaric said the world was living through a "decade of war," with armed conflicts dou-

bling in the past 15 years to approximately 130, and urged parties to conflicts from the Gaza Strip to Ukraine to uphold the rules of war.

She said the proliferation of conflicts was being accelerated by rapidly evolving military technology, particularly drones, which "create an environment where nowhere is safe anymore."

In the lead-up to the RSF's takeover of al-Fashir, residents told Reuters they had been taking refuge in underground bunkers to try to protect themselves from drones and shells after intensifying attacks on displacement shelters. (Reuters)

US firm with major telecom ties uncovers nation-state breach

Hackers working for an unnamed nation-state breached networks at Ribbon Communications, a key U.S. telecommunications services company, and remained within the firm's systems for nearly a year without being detected, a company spokesperson confirmed in a statement on Wednesday.

Ribbon Communications, a Texas-based company that provides technology to facilitate voice and data communications between separate tech platforms and environments, said in its October 23 10-Q filing, opens new tab with the Securities and Exchange Commission that the company learned early last month that people "reportedly associated with a nation-state actor" gained access to the company's IT network, with initial access dating to early December 2024.

The hack has not been previously reported. It is perhaps the latest example of technology companies that play a critical role in the global telecommunications ecosystem being targeted as part of nation-state hacking campaigns.

Ribbon did not identify the nation-state actor, or disclose which of its customers were affected by the breach, but told Reuters in the statement that its investigation has so far revealed three "smaller customers" impacted.

"While we do not have evidence at this time that would indicate the threat actor gained access to any material information, we continue to work with our third-party experts to confirm this," a Ribbon spokesperson said in an email. "We have also taken steps to further harden our network to prevent any future incidents."

The company reported to the SEC that "several customer files saved outside of the main network on two laptops do appear to have been accessed by the threat actor." The spokesperson declined to elaborate on "cus-

tomers files" but said there were a total of four "older files."

There is no evidence to date that the incident would give hackers access to customer systems and the company was not aware of any government customers being impacted, the spokesperson said.

Ribbon's technology facilitates real-time voice and data communications, allowing voice calls to join Web-based conference calls, for example.

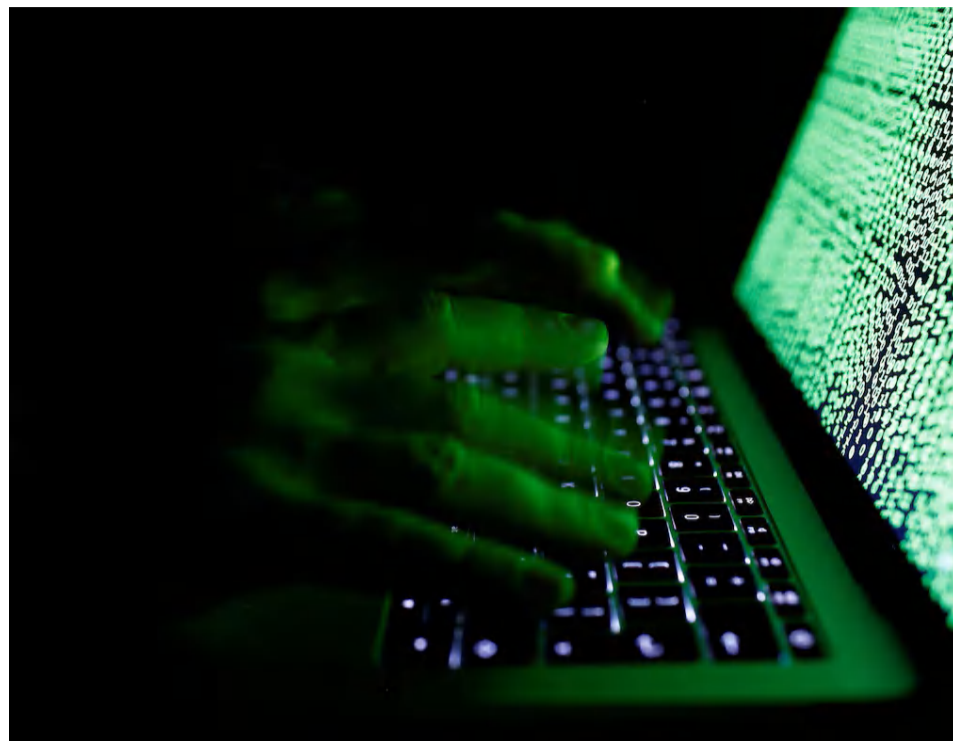
Chinese-linked hackers had previously targeted a host of U.S. and global telecommunications companies and a U.S. state's Army National Guard network in a wide-ranging and years-long cyberespionage campaign tracked as Salt Typhoon, first revealed in September 2024.

More recently, it emerged that Chinese hackers had infiltrated cybersecurity company F5, which provides software and products that help customers direct, manage and filter internet traffic.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington, told Reuters in an email that he was not familiar with this situation. Cyber operations are difficult to trace and attribute, Pengyu said, and "China opposes hacking and combats it in accordance with the law." Pengyu also pointed to recent allegations aired by the Chinese government of U.S.-linked hacking of China's National Time Service Center, and called the U.S. "the world's No. 1 hacking state."

A spokesperson for the U.S. embassy in Beijing did not address the allegations directly when asked about them by Reuters at the time, instead calling China "the most active and persistent cyber threat to U.S. government, private-sector, and critical infrastructure networks."

The FBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment, citing the ongoing federal government shutdown. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Director of Public Affairs Marci McCarthy said the



▲ A man types on a computer keyboard in front of the displayed cyber code in this illustration.

agency was aware of Ribbon's disclosure and referred questions to the company.

The Defense Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Ribbon Communications lists on its website customers around the world including BT, Verizon CenturyLink, Deutsche Telekom, SoftBank Group, TalkTalk and Tata. Government clients include the U.S. Defense Department, the University of Texas at Austin, the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Public Library, according to the website.

"Unit 42 continues to see advanced nation-state actors increasingly targeting networking and IT service companies that provide key services to government and critical infrastructure organizations," said Pete Renals, director of national security programs

for Unit 42 at Palo Alto Networks. "In many cases, their primary goal is to establish long-term persistence within these networks to enable global espionage."

Ribbon Communications is a "prime example" of this trend, Renals said, given its relationships with U.S. military and major organizations in the telecommunications and energy sectors in multiple countries.

"This central role as a supplier to sensitive government and infrastructure clients makes Ribbon a lucrative target for state-aligned actors, particularly from China and Russia," Renals said.

(Reuters)

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



▲ A satellite model is placed on a picture of Earth in this illustration.

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 and Thales of France and Italy's Leonardo 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 IRIS², Europe's planned secure satellite network, hailed the new venture but warned on the competition ahead.

"This first development contract for IRIS² 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.

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 anti-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. The deal could face objections from smaller German satellite maker OHB, 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.

The companies gave few details regarding governance but executives pledged to avoid a system of rotating leadership or making appointments based on nationalities,

(Reuters)

Powerful 6.3 quake kills at least 20 in Afghanistan, hundreds injured

A powerful 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck near the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e Sharif early on Monday, killing at least 20 people, injuring hundreds and damaging the city's historic Blue Mosque, authorities said, with the death toll likely to rise.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake hit at a depth of 28 km (17.4 miles) near Mazar-e Sharif, a city of around 523,000 people famous for its shrines and historic sites.

Mohammad Rahim, a survivor in Tashqurghan district close to the quake's epicentre, said the earth shook violently for around 15 seconds.

"When we finally got outside, there was so much dust in the air that we couldn't see anything," he told Reuters while standing in front of a collapsed building.

His mother and brother, who were both trapped in the rubble, were eventually freed by rescue workers and other locals, he said.

CASUALTIES REACH INTO HUNDREDS

At least 20 people were killed and 643 were injured, 25 of them seriously, according to preliminary figures from the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority.

"Our rescue and health teams have arrived in the area, and all nearby hospitals have been put on standby by the leadership to treat the injured," Health Ministry spokesperson Sharfat Zaman said.

Footage released by the Afghan Ministry of Defence showed military rescue teams digging through rubble and pulling the body of a young girl from the dirt. Reuters was not able to independently verify the location and date of the images.

The United Nations mission in Afghanistan said in a post on social media platform X it was on the ground supporting rescue efforts.

"We stand with the affected communities and will provide necessary support," the post said.

India, which has been seeking to reset relations with the Taliban after severing diplomatic ties following their 2021 takeover of Afghanistan, also pledged support.

"Indian relief material for the earthquake impacted communities is being handed over today. Further supplies of medicines to reach soon," Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar said in a post on X.

BLUE MOSQUE

The earthquake damaged part of the Blue Mosque, considered one of the holiest sites in Afghanistan and believed to be the burial site of the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad, Balkh province spokesperson Haji Zaid said.

The current structure was built in the 15th century.

Footage shared on social media and verified by Reuters showed broken masonry and tiles lying in the courtyard of the mosque, though the main structure remained standing.

The disaster is the latest challenge for war-torn Afghanistan's Taliban administration, already grappling with crises including an August quake that killed thousands in the east of the country, a sharp drop in foreign aid and mass deportations of Afghan refugees by neighbouring countries.

The quake disrupted power across the country, including to the capital Kabul, national power supplier Da Afghanistan



▲ A rescuer works following an earthquake at an unidentified location in Afghanistan, in this handout image released November 3, 2025. Afghan Red Crescent.

Breshna Company said in a statement.

Aid group Save The Children said the latest earthquake added to the humanitarian burden on the country, arriving just before winter when temperatures can drop below freezing.

"As temperatures fall, thousands of children in the earthquake-devastated east of the country are facing the winter with only tents for protection from the rain and snow," said Samira Sayed Rahman, a programme development and advocacy director

in the country.

"Now, families in the north are also experiencing fear and uncertainty after this latest powerful quake."

Afghanistan is particularly vulnerable to quakes as it lies on two active faults that have the potential to rupture and cause extensive damage.

More than 2,200 people were killed and thousands more injured after a quake and strong aftershocks hit the country at the end of August. (Reuters)

US government shutdown worsens financial woes for court-appointed defense lawyers

As the U.S. government shutdown disrupts paychecks for federal workers across the country, it is exacerbating the financial woes of lawyers who defend the poorest members of society when they are accused of federal crimes.

Some of the private attorneys who work as court-appointed lawyers for indigent federal criminal defendants have stopped taking new cases and have argued that their clients are being denied their right to effective counsel, according to court records and defense lawyers.

About 12,000 private lawyers across the U.S. serve on court-managed panels that provide counsel to defendants who cannot afford to hire an attorney. The program that compensates these lawyers under the Criminal Justice Act ran out of money in early July, and the shutdown - now in its 34th day - has resulted in Congress not authorizing any new funding.

Lawyers who serve on these panels represent about 40% of criminal cases against people who cannot afford attorneys, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. The remaining 60% of indigent cases are handled by full-time federal public defenders who work for the court system. Since mid-October, they have been working without pay as well.

Courts are still hearing cases during the shutdown.

The funding gap for the defense lawyers is an example of how the shutdown - which on Tuesday will tie a record for the longest in U.S. history - is hindering wide swaths of federal services. It has also resulted in cuts



▲ A U.S. flag flies over a federal courthouse Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.

to economic data collection, delays in air travel and, as of Saturday, an end to federal food aid to low-income Americans.

If the shortfall in funding for court-appointed defense lawyers persists, some courts could struggle to provide representation to indigent criminal defendants as guaranteed by the U.S. Supreme Court in its landmark 1963 ruling *Gideon v. Wainwright*, defense lawyers say.

The lack of government funding for lawyers, as well as for expert witnesses, interpreters and other service providers paid for using congressionally appropriated funds, has prompted a number of defendants to try to dismiss indictments against them, U.S. District Judge William Shubb in Sacramento, California, wrote in an October 20 ruling, opens new tab rejecting one such request.

Defense attorney Danica Mazenko, whose client in the case was charged with illegally possessing ammunition, argued in a court filing that allowing the prosecution to proceed without compensation for legal counsel "would render *Gideon* a hollow promise."

The judge declined to dismiss the charges, saying no court in the modern history of government shutdowns has held that delayed payment to court-appointed lawyers violated their clients' rights.

A lawyer for a New Mexico man charged with unlawfully possessing 16,300 pills containing fentanyl intended for distribution raised a similar argument, saying the case should be dismissed not only because he was not being paid but also because he could no longer hire and pay a forensic chemist to serve as an expert witness necessary for the

defense.

Expert witnesses for indigent defendants are compensated from the same pool of funds used to pay their lawyers.

U.S. District Judge Matthew Garcia declined, opens new tab to toss the case on October 16, calling that option an "extreme" remedy and saying he was "confident that the shutdown will eventually end and the necessary funds will become available."

However, the judge delayed the trial from November to January, citing the defendant's inability to pay for the expert witness key to his case.

"Criminal defendants and society are interested in ensuring that the former have effective assistance of counsel and access to a fair trial," Garcia wrote.

Richelle Anderson, the man's lawyer, in an interview said it was difficult to understand how Congress could fail to provide enough funding for defense lawyers like herself.

"You can't have a criminal trial if you don't have defense attorneys showing up," she said. "They want to arrest people and they want to prosecute people. The other side of that equation is funding attorneys for those people."

SOLE PRACTITIONERS AND SMALL FIRMS

About 85% of lawyers who serve on court-appointed panels for the indigent are sole practitioners or work for small firms, according to the administrative office.

Court officials and defense attorneys say they are concerned that more of these lawyers could cease taking on cases if funding remains unstable.

(Reuters)

Nothando Hlophe nominated for Crown Gospel Awards

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

NOTHANDO Hlophe, one of Eswatini's brightest gospel stars, has earned a prestigious nomination for the 18th Crown Gospel Music Awards.

The nomination for the Best of Africa Award places her among the continent's elite artists, recognised for their spiritual artistry and cultural contributions.

The Crown Gospel Music Awards, scheduled for November 23, 2025, at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, South Africa, is the premier event dedicated to celebrating gospel music excellence across Africa.

This annual ceremony is more than just an awards show, it is a vibrant cultural gathering that brings together over 30 top gospel artists, industry leaders, and fans from across the continent. The event is renowned for its blend of deep spiritual meaning and high-profile glamour, featuring a red-carpet experience, celebrity fashion, and electrifying stage performances.

Nothando Hlophe's nomination highlights her exceptional talent and the resonance of her music beyond Eswatini's borders. Known for her powerful voice and heartfelt messages, she has become a beacon of hope and faith for many. Upon being nominated, Hlophe expressed profound gratitude on social media, saying, "Honoured and humbled to share that I've been nominated for Best of Africa at the Crown Gospel Awards." She dedicated the recognition to believers, dreamers, and supporters of her journey, emphasising the collective spirit that had driven her success. "To God be the glory, Africa, this one's for us."

Her appreciation extended beyond the nomination itself, as she also acknowledged the crucial role of partnerships in her career. In a separate post, she thanked Eswatini Mobile for sponsoring her project 'A New Dawn,' highlighting how the support transcended financial aid to inspire hope and unity. She wrote, "Your sponsorship did more than support a project, it touched lives, inspired hope, and carried the spirit of unity that His Majesty's NKWE mandate so beautifully upholds."



▲ Gospel artist Nothando Hlophe.

Leehleza to headline star-studded show at Ocean Cuisine

MUSIC enthusiasts have a thrilling event to anticipate as the acclaimed artist Leehleza prepares to headline a vibrant show at Ocean Cuisine.

Scheduled for November 30, 2025, this Demin & White Party event promises an electrifying night featuring not only Leehleza but also the dynamic Sbu De Drum DJ and Sgitha, all converging to deliver an unforgettable experience.

Tickets for this much-anticipated gathering are priced at E100, offering fans an accessible opportunity to witness one of the finest talents in the South African music scene.

The upcoming event at Ocean Cuisine is expected to be more than just a concert; it is poised to be a celebration of South African culture and music. With the inclusion of Sbu De Drum DJ and Sgitha, the night will feature a diverse lineup that highlights the rich tapestry of sounds that define modern South African music.

Leehleza, born Lindelihle Gladwell, has carved a significant niche for himself in the South African music industry, particularly within the Amapiano genre. His vocal contributions have been integral to several chart-topping hits by the legendary Kabza De Small, including popular tracks like 'Umshove,' 'Bamba La,' and 'Amabele Shaya.' These collaborations have not only solidified Leehleza's reputation as a gifted vocalist but also as a key figure in the evolution of contemporary South African music.

The journey of Leehleza into the music world began in 2007, initially as a disc jockey. His early influences included prominent artists such as DJ Fresh, Vinny da Vinci, and Mbuso, whose styles helped shape his musical sensibilities.

By 2009, Leehleza was already making waves in local DJ battles, showcasing his skills and gaining recognition within his community. However, it was his fortuitous meeting with Kabza De Small, often hailed as the King of Amapiano, that marked a turning point in his career. This partnership propelled Leehleza into the spotlight, enabling him to reach a broader audience and contribute significantly to the genre's growing popularity.



▲ Acclaimed artist Leehleza.

Lyrikal Busta's 'Mtukulu' surpasses 30,000 Spotify streams

LYRIKAL Busta's latest single "Mtukulu" has made a remarkable impact since its release, amassing over 30,000 streams on Spotify within just one month.

The single, a collaboration with South African award-winning artist Intaba Yase Dubai, was launched on September 26, 2025, across all major digital platforms. In addition to its Spotify success, "Mtukulu" has garnered more than 13,000 streams on YouTube, reflecting its widespread appeal. The song's title, which means "grandchild" in SiSwati, encapsulates its heartfelt narrative and cultural depth.

"Mtukulu" explores themes of nostalgia, hope, and unity through a touching story. Lyrikal Busta explains that the song portrays an elderly man who repeatedly asks his grandson to play the track because it stirs cherished memories of the past. The song's vibrant and uplifting beat transforms it into a dance anthem, perfectly timed for the festive celebrations in December.

"It's a happy and energetic anthem, and people will most definitely have something to dance to this December," Lyrikal Busta shared.

Beyond its musicality, "Mtukulu" carries a powerful cultural message. Lyrikal Busta aimed to create a piece that resonates across generations, weaving a narrative that honours African heritage and identity. The collaboration with Intaba Yase Dubai was a deliberate choice to promote unity among Africans, especially considering recent xenophobic tensions in the region. "The aim was to create a song that would resonate with different age groups and tell a story of where we come from as African people. I had to feature Intaba Yase Dubai from South Africa to also convey a message of unity amongst Africans, especially in these times



▲ Lyrikal Busta working on 'Mtukulu' visualiser.

of xenophobic attacks," he explained.

Musically, the single is a masterful blend of Sofiatown's soulful vibes and the infectious rhythms of Amapiano, a genre that has taken Southern Africa by storm. South African producer Skatli Beats crafted the production, while Sean Cast HQ handled the engineering, ensuring a polished and professional sound that honours both tradition and modernity.

Reflecting on the creative process, Lyrikal Busta described his collaboration with Intaba Yase Dubai as enriching and inspiring. Their previous joint effort, "365 Days," achieved significant success with over 1 million views on streaming platforms,

setting high expectations for "Mtukulu." "Working on the song was amazing as I got to learn more from renowned South African award-winning artist Intaba Yase Dubai," he remarked.

The release of "Mtukulu" marks a significant moment for Eswatini's music industry, signalling the country's rising prominence in the regional music landscape. Lyrikal Busta encourages his fellow emaSwati to support the single by sharing and streaming it widely. "I would encourage all emaSwati to share the news and, most importantly, stream 'Mtukulu' as we promise nothing but top-tier quality of Eswatini music," he concluded.

Stories By Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

Sunset Concert 3.0 returns to showcase Eswatini's talent

ESWATINI is preparing for a night where music and ambition converge as Sunset Concert 3.0 returns on November 22, 2025, under the evocative theme "A Rare Stage."

The event is set to be a rich fusion of classical, opera, Afro-soul, jazz, acoustic and pop, and positions itself as both a showcase of local talent and a practical platform for artist development and inclusion. Sunset Concert 3.0 is set to unfold as an evening-length celebration of Eswatini's evolving musical identity, bringing together established performers and emerging voices for a program that stretches from operatic passages to stripped-back acoustic songs and contemporary Afro-soul grooves.

The organisers have kept the venue under wraps while finalising seating, capacity and accessibility arrangements, but ticket sales are already underway with general admission priced at E200 and VIP at E400, available at CMB Production Studio (Manzini Mall) and Berachah Kitchen (Mzimbane); supporters can reserve seats or make enquiries by calling 7633 4127. Preparation for the concert

has occupied the team for four months and has included composition and repertoire selection, intensive rehearsals, staging and technical planning, with September and October specifically devoted to building partnerships and rolling out marketing campaigns to attract sponsors, media and community stakeholders.

At the heart of the event is a roster of local performers whose varied backgrounds will be marshalled into a single, cohesive evening. Zinia is expected to bridge contemporary pop and acoustic sensibilities with emotive stagecraft; Sethu Magagula will anchor the Afro-soul segments with soulful delivery; Mongezi Simelane brings a versatility that can knit jazz-inflected arrangements into cross-genre collaborations; and Pop Opera sensation Celumusa "Ceceboy" Mkhathwa serves as both marquee performer and the driving force behind the initiative.

Ceceboy's prior appearances representing Eswatini at events such as the Africa Youth Orchestra Festival Vision Concert in

Pretoria and the Standard Bank Luju Food & Lifestyle Festival lend weight to his dual role as artist and mentor, and he frames the concert as more than an evening's entertainment, saying the platform exists to nurture emerging musicians and give them the experience and confidence to take on global stages. This year's edition carries a pronounced message of inclusion: programming will feature performances by artists living with disabilities, placing accessibility and representation at the forefront of the festival's public identity. That decision shapes the production's logistical priorities, requiring careful attention to stage access, sightlines, assistive technologies and seating arrangements that allow all performers to present at their best.

Beyond the immediate artistic ambition, Sunset Concert 3.0 is designed to function as an incubation-style platform. "This platform is about nurturing emerging musicians while giving them the experience and confidence to take on global stages," Ceceboy remarked.



▲ Ceceboy for Sunset Concert 3.0.

Sands delivers a soul-stirring performance at Bahle Gallery

By Gift Nkabinde

BAHLE Gallery in Mbabane hosted a captivating evening of Poetry & Acoustics on October 30, 2025.

The event was brought about by a collaboration between Bahle Gallery and Umsamo we Culture. The night as promised, delivered an engaging blend of artistic expression and musical entertainment with a live performance by Sandziso Matsebula, an Eswatini-born musician, singer and songwriter known by his stage name, Sands.

With tickets only at E200, guests were given a multifaceted evening that included a gallery tour which enhanced the ambience and experience overall. Sands took centre stage for a live performance,

which combined poetry and acoustics that brought unique entertainment to the audience.

This fusion of art forms was sure to create a memorable night of culture and creativity. "It was definitely worth fighting against the weather to be here," stated one of the attendees of the show.

The 'Poetry & Acoustics' event was a testament to the creative collaboration between Bahle Gallery and Umsamo we Culture, which aimed to bring compelling entertainment to the audience. The warm and inviting atmosphere of Bahle Gallery provided an ideal setting for Sands' performance, allowing guests to immerse themselves in a unique cultural experience. "Even the rain couldn't drown the magic," commented Irvin Bwalya, an attendee of the show. "The live performance at Bahle Gallery lit up the night with pure

soul and connection," Bwalya added.

Sands' live performance was the highlight of the evening, with his angelic voice stunning the audience as they bobbed their heads and sang along. The crowd was mesmerised by Sands' soulful voice, and the infectious energy added to the artistic vibe, creating a memorable night of culture and creativity. In the words of aspiring young artist Andile Nxumalo, "The energy was very wild when the crowd was shouting 'we want more', I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Sands is just something else," he stated. The audience was thoroughly enjoying the vibe, sipping wine, and dancing to Sands' performance, clearly entranced by the talent on stage. The atmosphere was electric, with the audience fully immersed in the music and the moment.



▲ Sands rendering his set at the Poetry & Acoustic event at Bahle Gallery.

Siboniso Ngwenya unveils AI-powered fashion assistant

A groundbreaking innovation in fashion technology has emerged from Eswatini, where young developer Siboniso Ngwenya has unveiled 'SboOutFitMatch,' an AI-powered fashion assistant app designed to revolutionise how women choose their daily outfits.

The app promises to simplify the often time-consuming and stressful process of deciding what to wear, catering especially to women balancing busy schedules for work, church, or special occasions. Ngwenya, currently pursuing an Advanced Diploma in Software Engineering at the Royal Science and Technology Park in Matsapha, is the visionary behind this project. His inspiration stemmed from observing the natural overlap between fashion enthusiasts and tech-savvy individuals.

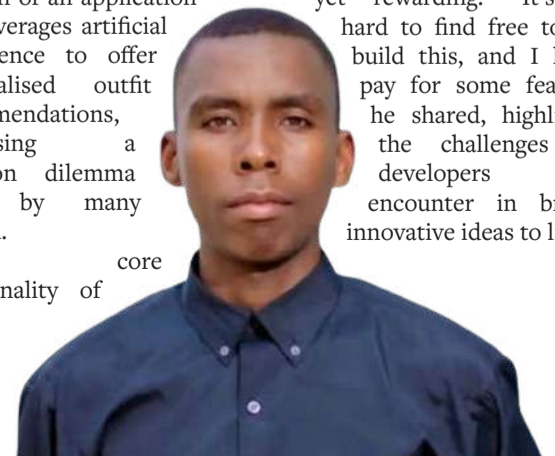
"I realised that people who love fashion are also into technology, so it was easy for me to bring the two together," he explained. This insight led to the creation of an application that leverages artificial intelligence to offer personalised outfit recommendations, addressing a common dilemma faced by many women.

The core functionality of

'SboOutFitMatch' lies in its ability to create a virtual wardrobe. Users upload photos of their clothing items, allowing the AI system to analyse each piece. Over time, the app learns individual style preferences and suggests outfit combinations tailored to different occasions. Ngwenya emphasised the app's adaptive learning capabilities. "It learns from the selections you make during upload," he said, adding that the more the app is used, the more accurate and personalised its recommendations become.

This innovation is particularly aimed at working women, teachers, and university students, groups that often face the daily challenge of choosing appropriate attire quickly. Ngwenya pointed out that "these are people who must decide every morning, and that wastes a lot of time."

Despite the promising potential of the app, Ngwenya faced significant hurdles during development. The scarcity of free development tools meant he had to invest in paid features, making the journey demanding yet rewarding. "It's very hard to find free tools to build this, and I had to pay for some features," he shared, highlighting the challenges local developers often encounter in bringing innovative ideas to life.



▲ Siboniso Ngwenya.

Mihlali Ndamase's hefty tax bill pain

CELEBRITIES are characterised by showbiz commentators and polymaths as individuals who strive for stardom and then conceal themselves from the world by donning straws and shades.

However, Mihlali Ndamase, a well-known content producer, appears to use the accessories as a facade to mask the emotional wounds she sustained during her bitter dispute with the South African Revenue Services (SARS) over a R580000 tax bill.

Sunday World can exclusively reveal that Ndamase has been slapped with the hefty tax bill after failing to pay her personal income tax. According to a letter of demand that the South African Revenue Service sent to Ndamase, the Soweto-born model initially owed it over R490000, but the debt vertiginously increased to more than R580000 after SARS imposed over R85000 in penalties and interest.

Sunday World learned that Ndamase, who recently hogged media headlines for purchasing two Hermes Birkin handbags for R1-million, has been disputing the figure and had vowed to challenge it. But she failed to do so.

SARS sent her a final letter of demand to settle the quantum on June 5, just a month after she blew one bar on the luxury handbags, which she claimed were an investment.

In the letter of demand, SARS advised her to pay the debt or enter into a payment plan with the receiver of revenue to settle it. At that time, the debt was just over R1-million.

The taxman threatened to auction Ndamase's assets if she failed to do so.

"According to the records of the South African Revenue Service, you have failed to pay

your tax debt for one or more tax years and tax periods ... you are requested to make full payment within 10 days from the date of this letter of demand," read the letter.

In the letter, SARS advised Ndamase to apply within 10 business days from the date of issuance to arrange to pay the debt in installments if he was unable to pay the full amount.

She was also advised to apply for suspension of the debt if she intended to submit or had submitted a formal dispute or compromise of a portion of the tax, where this would provide a higher return to the fund than liquidation, sequestration or other collection measures.

The taxman informed Ndamase that if she did not comply with its demands, it would go to court to seek an order to attach and auction off her assets.

"Failure to make full payment or use the above remedies may result in the following actions and possibly others: SARS may appoint any third party who presently or in the future will owe you money or hold money for you to settle your tax debt with this money. "A civil judgment is being entered against you, in which case a warrant of execution may be issued for the sheriff of the court to attach and sell your assets.

"If you are a natural person, you may apply for a reduction of the amount to be paid to SARS based on your and your dependants' basic living expenses.

"If you are a non-natural

person, you may apply for a reduction of the amount to be paid to SARS based on serious financial hardship," the papers read.

(Sunday World)



▲ Mihlali Ndamase, a well-known content producer, appears to use the accessories as a facade to mask the emotional wounds she sustained during her bitter dispute with the South African Revenue Services over a R580000 tax bill.

I want my son – Jub jub to kelly Khumalo

SOUTH African TV presenter and musician, Molemo "Jub Jub" Maarohanye, recently took to Instagram to address Kelly Khumalo, the mother of his child, to reprimand her for discussing him on podcasts, specifically regarding his alleged lack of child support.

He shared multiple videos, sharing that Khumalo's allegations about him are incorrect, she must stop painting him in a bad light, and he does want to be involved in their child, Christian's life.

"I've been looking at a lot of social media posts and comments and stuff about what the mother of my child has been saying about me. I don't understand what exactly you're trying to do, but firstly, I would like to thank you for raising up my boy at the time I couldn't, when I was locked up." In October, Khumalo made headlines after appearing on L-Tido's podcast, where she said that she has had to carry the responsibility of raising her children without much support from their fathers.

"I have never received any support, even financially," Kelly said. "They are all useless – well, except for one, Senzo Meyiwa. If he were here, trust me, he would have been hands-on and responsible," she shared.

Jub Jub first started by thanking Khumalo for being present in their child's life when he was in prison, before stating that he now wants to be a part of his life. "I would like to thank you for being present when I was not there and when I was still trying to get up on my feet," he said.

(IOL)

Tony Forbes forgives AKA's killers, vows to keep his son's legacy alive

DURING a recent guest appearance on the "SMWX" podcast, Tony Forbes, father of the late award-winning rapper Kiernan "AKA" Forbes, revealed that he has forgiven the men accused of killing his son. AKA and his friend Tebello "Tibz" Motsoane were shot dead outside the Wish restaurant on Florida Road, Durban, in February 2023. Seven men have been charged with the murders. The men face trial in June 2026.

"I have forgiven those people. I had not forgiven them before I knew who they were, but now that I know, I have forgiven them, but I'd like to see justice. I need to see justice.

"I have not walked around in the last 2 to 3 years thinking about the case or being angry, because if I did, that's all I would have done, and it would have just consumed me," shared Forbes.

He continued: "I feel we are on the right path. I feel like the police and prosecution have done a tremendous job. I have huge respect for them ... I feel positive about the future, that we tackle crime in this country in such a way that what

happened to my son, doesn't happen to other people's children ...

"Other parents have lost multiple children; I am not unique in that sense."

During the conversation with host Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh, Forbes recalled his bond with his son, AKA, earlier radio appearances, as well as the fateful night he found out that AKA had been shot.

"I went to sleep about 9pm, and I woke up after 12. Someone was calling my name through the gate. I don't think the bell was working ... I went out and it turned out to be my Godchild, Kiernan's cousin, Talia and her boyfriend.

"Talia held out the phone and said, 'My dad wants to tell you something' ... He just said, 'Tony, I've got bad news, Kiernan's been shot.' "I remember I had a brief moment where I wanted to ask, 'Is he okay, is he alive?', but Trevor just said that it was fatal. It didn't register for me. I just sat down on the steps right by the gate. I was confused. I didn't break down emotionally.

"Five minutes later, I was on the phone with Steffan (AKA's brother), and then he put his mother (Lynn Forbes) on. I think it was



▲ Tony Forbes, father of the late award-winning rapper Kiernan "AKA" Forbes, revealed that he has forgiven the men accused of killing his son.

like a good few minutes where we didn't say a word. There were no words to utter, there was nothing," said Forbes.

Forbes shared how he felt a rush of air while he was showering in the early hours of the morning after receiving the devastating news.

"At around 3am, I went to take a shower. It was a windstill evening, the window was open, and I just got into the shower and I felt this rush of air. I instinctively felt it was Kiernan, who was saying, 'Dad,

I'm on the other side, but I'm with you', and to this day, I feel that that was him."

"I'm not ashamed to say that I went to see a medium, and she said to me that it's not unusual when family members die in that way, as they leave this life, from the shock, it's like they are screaming, and it goes to the people who are biologically linked to them." Travelling to Durban the next day, Forbes faced the heart-wrenching task of identifying his son. He had never

experienced the loss of a loved one before and described his nervousness, but also found solace in the support they had received.

"Those two hours on the plane were just two of the most lonely hours I spent. I had never been to identify anyone in a mortuary, never, and suddenly here I am ... I never dealt with death, but I was able to ...

"I remember seeing him the first time. I was very nervous, but he looked like he was sleeping, and still, I was looking for movement. We saw him again after they worked on him; he looked peaceful.

"What was amazing was how people came around us and supported us. The undertakers paid for everything; we didn't pay a cent. The people at the house, his friends, bought food, drinks, and flowers. As much as it was a very sad time, it just showed how much Kiernan was loved."

As he described the painful experience of selecting a coffin, he shared: "The first time it really hit me was when we had to go select the coffin, and when I saw the coffins, that was the moment. It drove it home to me that this was it."

(IOL)

A new study suggests that a long daily walk may benefit your heart and overall health more than several shorter walks. The research, published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, shows that how you exercise — not just how many steps you take — affects the health benefits gleaned from daily physical activity.

In a large prospective cohort study of people who were less physically active (fewer than 8,000 steps per day), participants who got most of their daily steps in through a longer walk, 15 minutes or more, had a significantly lower risk of death than those who got their steps through brief walking bouts shorter than five minutes.

The benefit also applied to cardiovascular events such as heart attacks — people who took longer walks had a substantially lower risk than those who took shorter walks.

“Walking more is good for your heart — and if you can occasionally sustain a walk for 10–15 minutes, all the better,” said Evan Brittain, MD, professor of cardiovascular medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, who wasn’t involved in the research.

“Among people who average fewer than 8,000 steps per day, those who have an intentional practice of walking (whether they call it exercise or not) have better outcomes compared with those who walk for shorter periods,” he told Healthline.

The study, and others like it at the intersection of exercise science and preventive medicine, could eventually help reshape physical activity recommendations.

Long walks lowered death risk by 83%

The study followed 33,560 adults from the UK Biobank, a large health research database.

About 41% of participants were males, and their average age was 62. All participants were free of cardiovascular disease and cancer at the start of the study, which began between 2013 and 2015.

Those included in the study took fewer than 8,000 steps a day at the start of the trial, which researchers classified as “suboptimally active” based on current physical activity recommendations Trusted Source for adults. The average number of steps per day among the participants was just 5,165.

For a seven-day period, participants recorded their daily activity with a fitness tracker.

The researchers’ primary interest was how the duration of daily physical activity bouts affected mortality and cardiovascular disease.

To investigate this, participants were categorized into four groups based on their “step accumulation pattern,” which described how long their walking bouts lasted to achieve most of their daily steps.

In other words, did they engage in longer walks or more frequent, shorter ones throughout the day?

The four-step accumulation groups were:

- shorter than 5 minutes
- 5 minutes to shorter than 10 minutes
- 10 minutes to shorter than 15 minutes
- 15 minutes or longer

Most participants (about 43%) accumulated their steps in bouts lasting less than five minutes. Only 8% engaged in long walks of 15 minutes or more.

Despite relatively few people taking long walks, the study suggests they reaped the greatest benefits.

Over an average follow-up of 8 years, the

cohort had 735 deaths and 3,119 cardiovascular events, disproportionately affecting the short walk group. Those who preferred the shortest walks (under 5 minutes) had 4.36% all-cause mortality. That fell to just .80% in the long walk group (15 minutes or longer), an 83% lower relative mortality risk.

Cardiovascular disease risk followed a similar pattern. Participants who took short walks had a 13% rate of cardiovascular events, compared with 4.39% among those in the long-walk group — roughly one-third the risk.

Despite these compelling findings, the research comes with some caveats. Brittain notes that there are limitations to the study’s design and observational nature.

“We should be cautious about assuming a short snapshot of step data predicts events nearly a decade later,” he said. “We need more longitudinal and real-world physical activity data from patients seeking care.”

The authors admit that it’s not clear why, from a physiological perspective, longer walks would promote greater health benefits. However, they suggest that longer bouts may be necessary to activate key components of the body’s cardiometabolic systems, such as insulin sensitivity.

15-minute daily walk may significantly lower your heart disease risk



How to be active every day

While the findings suggest that longer walks may offer greater health benefits than shorter ones, any exercise is better than none.

However, this should make you consider taking time specifically for physical activity rather than just incidental exercise from your daily activities.

“While any activity is better than none for maximal benefit, folks who are more sedentary likely need to be exercising with intention — getting quality exercise bouts as opposed to hitting a specific step count,” said Sarah F. Eby, MD, PhD, a sports medicine specialist at Mass General Brigham Sports Medicine and assistant professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School. Eby wasn’t involved in the research.

Strategies for how you can incorporate more (and longer) walks into your day, according to Brittain, include:

- taking a 10–15 minute walk after a meal
- parking farther away from your destination and walking

- scheduling calls during walks
- inviting coworkers for walking meetings

If you’re trying to get a little extra boost out of your walk, you can also try “Japanese walking,” an interval walking exercise designed to gently get your heart rate up.

Despite walking being generally accessible, Eby points out that for some individuals, that may not be the case.

Some individuals may only find they have time for daily exercise through shorter bouts of activity. Socioeconomic status is also a factor. “Folks with lower income levels tend to have less flexibility with work schedules and often live in more polluted areas that lack adequate, safe, walking infrastructure,” Eby said. Additionally, for people with certain conditions, like knee arthritis, long walks may not be an ideal form of daily physical activity.

“Anytime I’m working with patients, I like to explore their values and goals to craft an exercise regimen with these in mind. If we can find a way to make exercise meaningful or enjoyable for the otherwise exercise-hesitant individual, that will go a long way in promoting adherence to regular exercise,” Eby said. (Healthline)



How many bananas should you eat per day?



habit is causing you to eat more calories than your body needs, it could lead to unhealthy weight gain.

Additionally, over 90% of the calories in bananas come from carbs

In unripe or green bananas, the main source of carbs comes from starch. As the fruit ripens Trusted Source, the starch converts to sugar. Thus, by the time your banana is ripe enough to eat, a large proportion of the calories may be coming from sugar.

Carb over-consumption — without balancing it with proteins and healthy fats — could make blood sugar control more difficult for those with blood sugar conditions, such as diabetes or prediabetes.

Additionally, eating too many bananas

may lead to nutrient deficiencies, especially if you're not making room for foods that contain the nutrients bananas lack, such as protein, fat, calcium, vitamin D, and iron.

Finally, people with late-stage kidney failure may need to monitor their potassium levels because too

much can interfere with medications. It would take more than one banana to have an effect, but it's a good idea to speak with your doctor to understand how many you can safely eat.

How many bananas should you eat?

Balance and

The bottom line

Bananas are one of the most popular fruits in the world. They're full of important nutrients, but eating too many could do more harm than good.

Too much of any single food may contribute to weight gain and nutrient deficiencies. One to two bananas daily are considered a moderate intake for most healthy people.

Be sure to eat this fruit as part of a balanced diet that provides all the nutrients your body needs. (Healthline)

FOR most healthy people, bananas are a tasty, nutritious fruit.

But it's best to just eat one or two a day, as too many could lead to weight gain and nutrient deficiency. Eating a balanced diet is key for optimal health.

Bananas are an incredibly popular fruit — and it's no wonder why. They're convenient, versatile, and a staple ingredient in many cuisines worldwide.

Though bananas are a healthy, nutrient-dense snack, eating too many could be detrimental. This article explores how many bananas you should eat per day.

Bananas are highly nutritious

Bananas are as delicious as they are convenient, but their nutritional value is what really makes them shine.

They're a good source of essential nutrients, including manganese, potassium, and vitamins C and B6.

A medium-sized, fresh banana (118 grams) provides the following nutrient-
sTrusted Source:

- Calories: 105
- Carbs: 27 grams (g)
- Fiber: 3 g
- Fat: 0.3 g
- Protein: 1 g
- Vitamin C: 10 milligrams (mg) or 11% of the Daily Value (DV)
- Vitamin B6: 0.43 mg or 25% of DV
- Potassium: 422 mg or 9% of DV
- Manganese: 0.32 mg or 14% of DV
- Magnesium: 32 mg or 8% of DV

Bananas also contain various plant compounds that may Trusted Source reduce stress, inflammation, and your risk of chronic diseases.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Trusted Source recommends eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Adding bananas to your routine is a great way to boost your intake of whole fruit and promote your overall health.

Very low in protein and fat

The vast majority of the calories in bananas come from carbs. They only provide negligible amounts of protein and fat.

In fact, protein and fat combined make up less than 8% Trusted Source of the total calorie content of a banana.

Protein is a major structural component of your body, and it's needed for proper immune function, tissue repair, muscle building, and bone health.

Meanwhile, fats provide energy, assist with absorbing fat-soluble nutrients, and play a role in hormone production and brain health.

Because bananas lack these vital nutrients, they don't hold up well on their own as a nutritionally complete meal.

If a banana is your usual go-to snack, consider pairing it with a source of healthy fat and protein, such as peanut butter, a handful of walnuts, or a boiled egg, to make it more nutritionally balanced.

Too much of a good thing

Bananas are a healthy addition to almost any diet, but too much of any single food — including bananas — could do more harm than good.

Bananas are not typically considered a high calorie food. However, if your banana



va-

NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ Britain's King Charles arrives for a church service at St. Mary Magdalene Church on the Sandringham Estate, where Andrew Mountbatten Windsor, younger brother of Britain's King Charles, will move, following the king's decision to strip him of his title of prince and evict him from his Windsor residence, in Norfolk, Britain.



▲ Volunteers Craig Harvey and Randunu Thrikawala place food items in a truck bed during a mobile food distribution at Cedar Creek High School, in Cedar Creek, Texas.



▲ A rickshaw moves on the street during a downpour in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



▲ A drone view of damage caused by Hurricane Melissa, in Belmont, Jamaica.



▲ Kenya's Benson Kipruto crosses the line ahead of Kenya's Alexander Mutiso to win the men's elite race at the New York City Marathon.



▲ A man lights candles at the grave of his loved one while musicians play during the Day of the Dead festivities, in Mazatlan Villa de Flores, Mexico.

Sundowns to face off with Rulani in Champions League

MAMELODI Sundowns and Rulani Mokwena are set for an emotional reunion after Masandawana were drawn to face Algerian giants MC Alger in Group C of this season's Caf Champions League.

Mokwena left Sundowns to join Wydad Casablanca at the start of last season, moving on to take over at MC Alger ahead of the new campaign.

Rulani's fast start

The former Sundowns head coach has got off to a fast start with MC Alger, who are flying in the Algerian top flight and have reached the Champions League group stages.

There promises to be plenty of chatter flying back and forth ahead of the games between MC Alger and the Brazilians.

Mokwena was assistant coach to Pitso Mosimane when Sundowns won their only Champions League title up to now in 2016.

He won four Betway Premiership titles, the CAF African Football League, one MTN8 and one Nedbank Cup either as solo head coach or joint head coach of Masandawana.

Mokwena's spell at Wydad was not smooth sailing. He took over a side in need of a turnaround after failing to make it into continental competition for the 2024/25 season. But he left before the season ended



▲ Rulani Mokwena.

amid rumours of unpaid salaries, and missed out on coaching Wydad at the Fifa Club World Cup in the USA.

MC Alger have won five and drawn one of their first six league games of the season, and are a point behind the two sides above them – MC Oran and Olympique Akbou – but have four games in hand.

They did make hard work of qualifying for the group stages, winning on the away goals rule after a 1-1 away draw with Cameroon's Colombe Sportive was followed by a goalless draw at home in the second leg.

Al Hilal of Sudan are also in Group

C, along with DR Congo's FC St Eloi Lupopo. Lupopo stunned Orlando Pirates on penalties in Orlando to reach the group stages.

Sundowns hold the edge

Sundowns and Al Hilal are familiar foes, meeting three years in a row in the group stages of the Champions League between 2021 and 2023.

The Tshwane giants did not lose to their Sudanese opponents in that time, winning four and drawing two of their six meetings.

Al Hilal did prevail over Sundowns in the final qualifying round for the group stages of the 2008 Caf Confederation Cup, winning 4-3 on aggregate. **(The Citizen)**

Haaland fires Man City up to second in Premier League

Erling Haaland scored twice to propel Manchester City up to second in the Premier League with a 3-1 win over Bournemouth on Sunday.

The Cherries started the day in second thanks to the longest unbeaten run in the English top flight.

But Andoni Iraola's side were undone by the scintillating form of the Norwegian striker, who took his tally to 13 Premier League goals in 10 games.

Haaland's relentless streak is maintaining City's title challenge as they reduced the gap to leaders Arsenal back to six points and edged one point ahead of Liverpool, who they face next weekend.

Despite a first defeat in 10 games away to Aston Villa last weekend, Pep Guardiola remained confident his side can pose a threat to Arsenal come May.

There were more encouraging signs for Guardiola as Rayan Cherki and Phil Foden shone in creative roles, while Nico O'Riley became the first City player other than Haaland to score in the Premier League for over a month.

Buoyed by their unbeaten streak since losing at Liverpool on the opening night of the season, Bournemouth started brightly.

However, their brave high line was exposed on 17 minutes when Cherki's header allowed Haaland to gallop clear from inside his own half to slam past Djordje Petrovic.

The visitors levelled eight minutes later when Gianluigi Donnarumma claimed he was impeded as the Italian tried to

collect a corner and Tyler Adams thrashed home the loose ball.

But Haaland restored City's advantage before halftime by racing onto another Cherki pass in behind the Bournemouth defence to round Petrovic and slot home his 26th goal for club and country this season.

The 25-year-old also became only the third player to ever score multiple goals in four consecutive Premier League home games after Luis Suarez and Robbie Fowler.

Guardiola has called for greater contributions from his other attacking players to lessen the goalscoring burden on his prolific No 9.

Still no City player other than Haaland has scored more than once in the league this season, but O'Riley chipped in from full-back to seal the three points.

Foden was the creator this time as O'Riley strode forward before arrowing a low shot into the far corner.

Haaland was denied the chance of a hat-trick as he was replaced by Omar Marmoush eight minutes from time with one eye on facing his former club Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Wednesday.

A double was enough to keep City still within range despite Arsenal's rampant run of nine consecutive wins and seven straight clean sheets in all competitions.

(Supersport)

Young SA superstar confirms Mauritius entry

CHRISTO Lamprecht, South Africa's latest PGA TOUR member, has confirmed his place in this December's AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open as he looks to go one better than his runner-up finish here last year.

Lamprecht will compete at the spectacular La Réserve Golf Links, Heritage Resorts, from 18-21 December having just secured his PGA TOUR playing privileges for the new season.

The 24-year-old heads to Mauritius on the back of a groundbreaking debut season on the Korn Ferry Tour where he claimed a victory on his way to finishing ninth overall among the top 20 who earned their PGA TOUR cards.

Lamprecht made a spectacular debut in the 2024 AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open where he challenged for the title before finishing tied second with Dylan Naidoo two shots behind champion John Parry.

NEW GENERATION

He returns to the island representing a new generation of South African golfers which he believes is one of the strongest to emerge from the country in recent years. Lamprecht names several young South Africans who've competed in Mauritius over the years on this list, including Naidoo.

"We're a strong group of golfers in



▲ Christo Lamprecht.

our generation, from Dylan Naidoo to Aldrich Potgieter and Wilco Nienaber, Jayden Schaper, Deon Germishuys, Garrick Higgs, Luca Filippi and so many others. I think it's one of the strongest generations that has come through South Africa in a long time, and it's awesome to be a part of that."

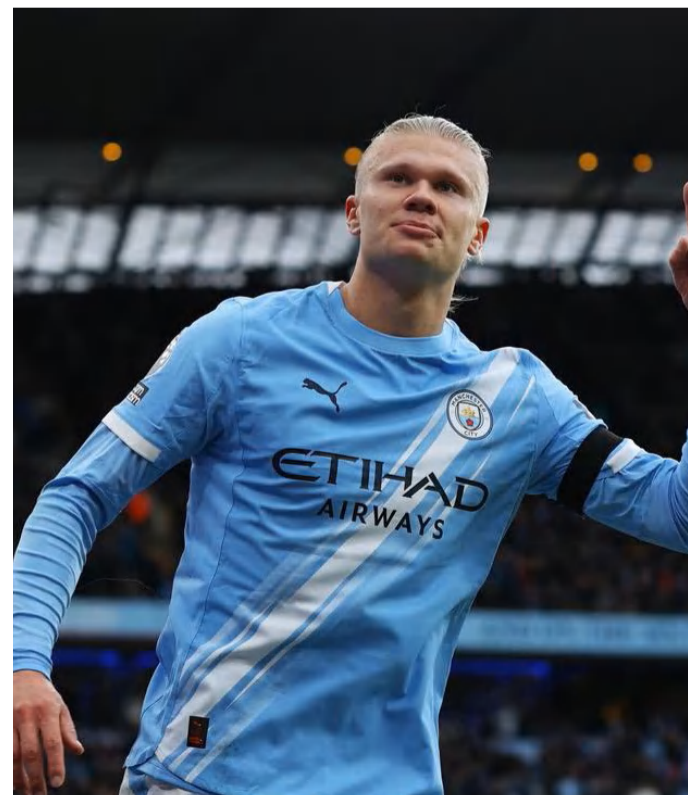
Both Lamprecht and Naidoo used their runners-up finishes in Mauritius to build to bigger things, with

Naidoo going on to secure his full DP World Tour card for the first time in his career.

The AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open was certainly a defining week for Lamprecht early in his professional career.

"I think it helped that I had my family with me and I just treated it as a holiday week, which is easy to do in Mauritius."

(Supersport)



▲ Erling Haaland.

Dembele fit as PSG prepare to take on Bayern juggernaut

OUSMANE Dembele, who scored in Paris St Germain's win over Bayern Munich in the Club World Cup quarterfinals, is available for Tuesday's Champions League clash between the French and German champions, PSG coach Luis Enrique said.

France striker Dembele, who had scored in stoppage time when a nine-man PSG beat Bayern 2-0 in July, left the field after feeling discomfort in his right thigh at Lorient last week, and only played 18 minutes in Saturday's Ligue 1 match against Nice.

"We do not take risks with any players. But Ousmane Dembele is fit, he has been in every training session for the last two weeks," Luis Enrique told reporters on Monday.

"He is improving his physical fitness and he will certainly play tomorrow. I do not know for how many minutes, but he will play because he is ready to compete."

Bayern have won every single match since their loss to European champions PSG. They have won 15 competitive matches in a row, including all nine in their Bundesliga campaign.

Both Bayern and PSG have won all three of their Champions League matches so far and are equal on goal difference.

PSG are unbeaten in their last



▲ Ousmane Dembele.

eight competitive matches and the manager is confident of extending that streak at home against the Bavarians.

"We know how difficult it will be. We are ready and motivated to win," Luis Enrique said.

"I think there will be similar situ-

ations to what we saw in the United States last summer, with lots of intensity... in front of our supporters, with the atmosphere we created every game, we're confident that we can improve our performance level to try to overcome their pressure."

(Supersport)



▲ Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz.

Sinner, Alcaraz to meet in South Korea exhibition match

JANNIK Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz will face off in an exhibition match in South Korea in January ahead of the Australian Open, organisers said on Monday. Italy's Sinner usurped his rival from Spain as world No 1 after winning the Paris Masters for the first time on Sunday.

The two best players in men's tennis will meet in the "Hyundai Card Super Match" on 10 January in Incheon, near Seoul.

"For domestic tennis fans it will be the very first opportunity to see the two top-ranked players compete," said a Hyundai press release.

Alcaraz, who has complained about there being too many matches on the ATP Tour, leads their head-to-head record 10-5.

Sinner will defend his Australian Open title in the first Grand Slam of 2026, which begins in Melbourne on 18 January.

(Supersport)

Boks prepare for Paris 'pressure cooker' as Kolisi eyes 100th Test

THE Springboks are gearing up for the ultimate test in a Paris "pressure cooker" when they take on France in Saint Denis in their second match of their end-of-year-tour this coming Saturday.

It is set to be an incredible spectacle, with it the first meeting between the teams since the Boks edged the hosts 29-28 in their World Cup quarterfinal in 2023, while it is also set to be captain Siya Kolisi's 100th match, if selected as expected.

The Boks enjoyed a perfect warmup for the game with a thumping 61-7 win over Japan at Wembley Stadium in London this past Saturday, and will be taking plenty of momentum into the match, which coach Rassie Erasmus expects to be played in an incredible atmosphere.

'Passion, intensity, pressure'

"We know the challenge of playing against France away from home. In 2022 (in Marseille), we (coaching staff) were still allowed next to the field, and the passion, intensity, pressure ... and the whole cauldron in which you play there (is incredible)," said Erasmus.

"I think we have sufficient depth, experience, quality players and youth in the squad. But it is a totally different ball game (playing in France). It is a pressure cooker and it really gets to you.

"It did in 2022 when we lost (30-26) there. I think Kwagga (Smith) got a yellow and Pieter-Steph (du Toit) got a red. We did beat them in the World Cup but we obviously know how close that game was.

"So it is a massive match coming up, and then we still have Ireland (in Dublin), as well as two other Test matches. It (the games) will be a massive step up from Japan and some of the other Test matches we played (against Italy and Georgia) in the incoming



▲ Springbok leaders, Rassie Erasmus and Siya Kolisi.

series."

Team announcement

The Boks will likely bolster their team from the one that turned out against Japan, with players like Eben Etzebeth, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Damian Willemse, Thomas du Toit and possibly Canan Moodie coming into the match 23.

The Boks will, however, be without the services of powerhouse prop Ox Nche, who injured his knee and ankle against Japan, and is out of the tour.

Erasmus has opted to call up Asenathi Ntlabakanye in Nche's place, but Gerhard

Steenkamp is in line to start at loosehead this weekend, having replaced Nche in the match against Japan.

Erasmus is, however, happy with the cover they have in the squad, and believes they have a team capable of beating France, but that they will need handle and overcome the pressure that is to come.

"I think we are building well. But pressure is another thing and I think we will feel that in France. I think most of the guys have experienced that sound, how the French whistle and support their team, so most of the guys have experienced that," explained

Erasmus.

"But we will keep on reminding each other about it. Like before the Eden Park game (against the All Blacks), we knew what was coming and still couldn't do it (win) there.

"So we will have to do some really intelligent and physical stuff this (coming) week to be ready for the (France) game."

Erasmus will name his matchday-23 for the France Test this weekend around lunch-time on Monday.

(The Citizen)

'Karate Kids' for STANLIB Oyama Champs 2026

By Chris Dlamini

THE 16th edition of the annual STANLIB Oyama Champ of Champs will have a new category.

Following the 15th edition over the weekend, on Saturday, to be precise at Mavuso Sports Emporium, Manzini, it has been seen as crucial and necessary that the tournament adds a new spark to ensure the young also get to experience it, especially because of its international flair as neighbouring countries usually attend.

"This is the 15th edition, and STANLIB Eswatini has always been there for us as our

title sponsor. Its an old partnership that was only delayed by covid-19 when we could be talking more editions.

"Having seen this one through, it dawns to us that it's time we introduce the youngsters next year. They have been missing out over the years, yet they are the future of karate," said President of the Oyama Kyokushinkaikan Karate Association (OKKE) Shihan Vilakati.

He was addressing the floor before this year's winners were presented with their glittering trophies. Shihan Vilakati said the next edition was most likely revert to the end of November, explaining why they had to host this a bit earlier.

"We have an international event in Japan on that period which we will attend to com-

pete and have three of ours graded. We are also missing many of our students due to their exams as we also encourage academic excellence," he said.

He then thanked STANLIB for the growing partnership while also noted forgetting the Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council (ESRC), also singling out the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Darius Dlomo's commitment and passion which he said has kept Oyama alive through the darkest of times.

In appreciation, both STANLIB Eswatini and ESRC were awarded and took home trophies. Otherwise, he was full of praise for the champions, mostly new, which he said was good because it would encourage them to work even harder to defend that next year.



▲ Sempar Abdu Rahman who is a son to sensei Abdul.

Young fighters' no fear mentality great- Sensei Abdul

By Chris Dlamini

AFTER a gruelling test in the STANLIB Oyama Champ of Champs 2025 edition, men's open weight champion Sensei Abdul Khaaliq Dlamini has opened up.

Dlamini, an Ashihara Karate 3rd Dan Black belt, beat younger players to the STANLIB Oyama Champ of Champs 2025 heavyweight division title.

The open division has always come as the most anticipated one as it is about the heavyweights and fierce fighters, which is just what it was before Dlamini was crowned the champion.

"It's time to retire, Boss! These boys give you a good run for your money. I'm happy for the next generation as we can pass the baton with pride, for they have mastered the 'Never Give Up' and 'Nothing Is Impossible' mentality. That fearless mentality will take them to greater heights in life generally.

"With such mentality, they can move mountains to succeed in life endeavours," he reacted after winning and collecting his champions' trophy alongside his two-year-old Sempai son, Abdur Rahman.

He said, "These young and tougher boys



▲ Sensei Abdul Dlamini receiving his prize while his son Rahman followed him during the Stanlib Oyama cup.

bring the best out of us. They bring out the experience, discipline, and strategy in your game. They are the best teacher as they put you in the deepest of waters and your years of training and competition come to play," said the champion.

He said it reminded him that as senior who has devoted so many years of his life into Ashihara Karate reminded him he was no walkover. Sensei Dlamini also said their success also came as courage to the youngsters to be on the tatami (fighting ring or

mat. He foresaw a bright future for Oyama and praised its President Shihan Mfanafuthi Vilakati for job well done over the years. He also acknowledged the professional setup and massively well-organised tournament.

By Sibusiso Masilela

sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

THEY came; they saw and conquered. This is none other than Ezulwini Titans during the Siphocosini Boxing tournament held on Saturday.

Titans finished tops in the domestic competition held under the auspices of the Eswatini Boxing Association.

They were followed by Stepping Razor Academy and the host club, who came second and third, respectively.

EBA Secretary Nkosinathi Dlamini said the tournament was a success.

"We are happy with the proceedings of the tournament, and we commend teams for attending the tournament in numbers. We are looking forward to another successful domestic competition, which will be announced in due course," he said.

Dlamini also thanked Siphocosini Indvuna yenkhundla Wilton Mamba for supporting the tournament. "We are grateful for the support of Siphocosini Indvuna Yenkhundla,

Titans Conquer Siphocosini Boxing Tourney



▲ Boxers with dignitaries during the Siphocosini tournament.

and his support will contribute to the development of the sport in the area," he said.

The participating clubs included RES Boxing Club, U-Tech Boxing Club, Titans Boxing Club, Siphoco City Boxing Club, Zebra Force Boxing Club, Ingwe Boxing Club, Manzini Boxing Club, Stepping Razor Boxing Academy, Zulwini Boxing Club, and Cor-

rectional Boxing Club.

The domestic competition's results will guide the Boxing mother body in selecting boxers for the 2025 International Boxing Association world championships scheduled for December in Uzbekistan. Following these selections, there have been international changes affecting the sport. Recently,

IBA was stripped of its authority to regulate the 2026 Commonwealth Games scheduled for Scotland, marking a significant change in international boxing governance.

This means that countries will now have to affiliate with the newly established World Boxing, and the IBA stands to lose close to 20 members in Africa.

The process has further stalled the announcement of the Boxing beneficiary for the 2028 Olympic Games, E6 million scholarships recently announced by the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA).

IBA also lost its authority to regulate the 2024 Olympic Games boxing competition due to the tension that was sparked by the war between Russia and Ukraine.

EOCGA board member Pearl Dlamini is also an IBA executive member.

IBA is funding several initiatives in Africa, such as the Mandela Boxing Cup.

By Sibusiso Masilela
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

WHAT a weekend! Football is certainly coming home as more or less 4 000 spectators braved the wet weather to watch the MTN Premier League Y'ello Sunday double-header fixtures at Mavuso Sports Centre, Manzini.

With Mbabane Highlanders and Mbabane Swallows looking so good early on in the season, the numbers are set to grow and one can only hope by the time the two sides meet, government will have made Somhlolo National Stadium available at an affordable price for domestic football, as opposed to the E10 000 most elite teams never make all season, unless they host crowd pullers like these two, and then Wanderers who are also back in top flight football action. The latter just needs to start winning in what is quickly proving to be a rollercoaster league after matchday four (4). Let's rewind a little into the highlights of this matchday.

At the summit:

Mbabane Swallows (8 points)

- After stunning a star-studded Royal Leopard with a well-earned 3-2 win on Sunday, the Beautiful Birds shot straight to the top of the standings. In four games, Tinyoni, as they are also fondly known, now have three wins out of four games. Its the first time they occupy the summit this season, having dislodged Malanti Chiefs.

Closer to Swallows:

Malanti Chiefs (2nd - 8 points)

- The gold and black outfit is resistant to defeat so far. They got a point on Saturday against Ezulwini United following a 1-all draw. Malanti had just dealt yet another star-studded side in Young Buffaloes prior to this match.
- Behind them and the leaders are Mbabane Highlanders, Manzini Sea Birds and Rangers, all on seven points in four games.

Defending champions

Nsingizini Hotspurs (6th - 6 points)

- Due to their participation in the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League 2025/26 prior to facing Ubombo Sugar FC on Saturday, they have six points in two games. They are one of three teams yet to lose a match this season.

The new coaches

Gcina Dlamini (Manzini Wanderers)

- 14th - 2 points
- He only started training the currently not well-placed hub giants on Thursday morning after leaving Ubombo Sugar FC. His debut earned them a point albeit against the run of play, but he looks set to change their misfortunes in no time - there were also few pointers including the fact they scored two goals against a side that looked ready to tear them apart, particularly in the second half.

Van-Rooyen Magagula

- He took over from Gcina Dlamini who has joined Manzini Wanderers. Magagula is an interim coach for Ubombo Sugar FC and his first game was a defeat.

The upsets

Royal Leopard (15th - 1 point)

- Fresh from the TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup 2025/26 second preliminary stage, the police side started on a low note, allowing Mbabane Swallows to do the playing, and they were soon 2-0 down by half-time. They fought back to level matters in the second half, even looking

A rollercoaster league!

... As Birds fly to the summit, Wanderers, Leopard remain bottom loggers



▲ Current MTN Premier League log leaders Mbabane Swallows.

to go and win the match, but their rivals still had one more wing to fly just above them. So, Leopard lost 3-2. They still have one point at the bottom part of the table.

Young Buffaloes (10th - 4 points)

- What is happening here? Has the Buffaloes lost its horns? They lost again, a second blow in two consecutive games. Malanti Chiefs inflicted their pain prior to Rangers doing the same over the weekend with a narrow 1-0 margin. Something is amiss Mr Dominic Kunene, Sir! If they don't shape up soon, they will ship out as potential title contenders.

At rock bottom

Sisonkhe FC (16th - 0 points)

- It hasn't worked out so far for the hub outfit, and at the rate things are going, they will soon count as relegation candidates.

The goals

- A total nine goals were witnessed in two enthralling fixtures at Mavuso Sports Centre on Sunday - this was the venue where it the most goals were scored between Mbabane Swallows and Royal Leopard (5), then Manzini Wanderers and Mbabane Highlanders (4).
- Overall, 22 goals were scored across all eight fixtures. This is double the 11 from matchday 4.

The fans corner:

The Mavuso Sports Centre in Manzini is still the place to be for the fans. At least more or less 4 000 turned up for the Y'ello Sunday games where the country's big guns were playing.

Upcoming fixtures (matchday 5):

- R. Leopard vs. T. Celtics
- Ubombo Sugar FC vs. G. Mamba
- M. Chiefs vs. M. Highlanders
- M. Pirates vs. Rangers
- Sisonkhe vs. Y. Buffaloes
- M. Swallows vs. Ez. United
- Ns. Hotspurs vs. Amawele



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs players.



▲ Malanti Chiefs players.

By **Sibusiso Masilela**
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI legend Dennis ‘Yuki’ Masina says he wants to produce future Sihlangu stars.

The former Orlando Pirates and Supersport United player said this after being named the best coach for the 2025 Pitso Mosimane Development Programme on Sunday in Johannesburg.

The annual ceremony was organised by the astute South African mentor, attended by coaches from the nine South African provinces.

Masina oversaw the Mpumalanga division of the programme.

“I am happy with the award, which is a result of the support that I got from the people of Mpumalanga province throughout the year. I believe we can produce future Sihlangu through the three youngsters who are part of the Mpumalanga program from Eswatini,” he said.

The former KV Mechelen player also thanked Mosimane for including him in the programme.

“I am honoured to be part of this program, which contributes to the development of

‘I want to produce future Sihlangu stars’ – ‘Yuki’

football in the SADC region,” he said.

Masina played for several teams in South Africa, including the defunct Umtata Bush Bucks.

He once worked with his compatriot, Milton Dlamini, as an assistant coach at a Mpumalanga-based side, Destiny College.

Masina also had stints with hub giants Manzini Wanderers, Matsapha United, and Mbabane Midas City locally.

He boasts of numerous Sihlangu caps.

The Pitso Mosimane development programme operates in 17 schools, and the beneficiaries include Curro Academy Mbombela, Curro Academy Wilgeheuwel in Roodepoort, Meridian Rustenburg in the Northwest, and Curro Academy Sandown and Meridian Pinehurst in the Western Cape.

The goal is to equip learners with the technical, intellectual, and social skills they need to compete at the highest levels of football.



▲ Former Orlando Pirates and Supersport United player Dennis ‘Yuki’ Masina was named the best coach for the 2025 Pitso Mosimane Development Programme on Sunday in Johannesburg.



▲ SA giants Kaizer Chiefs.

SA’s Kaizer Chiefs test for Lindo

By **Sibusiso Masilela**
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI international defender Lindo Mkhonta’s Zesco United will face Soweto giants Kaizer Chiefs in the 2025 CAF Confederation Cup group stages.

The Zambia giants will also take on two Egyptian sides, Zamalek and Al Masry, in Group D continent’s second premier club competition following the draw conducted on Monday.

The Group Stages begin on the weekend of 21-23 November with two rounds played ahead of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Morocco 2025. They will resume on the weekend of 23-25 January 2026

Mkhonta could not be reached for comment on the matter when compiling this report. he Young Buffaloes and Malanti Chiefs defender is among the country’s five foreign-based players, which include Justice Figareido (Chippa United, South Africa), Mxolisi Mkhonto (Morapule Wanderers, Botswana), Banele ‘Stiga’ Ndzabandzaba (Botswana Defence Force), and Sizwe Gwebu (Uganda Police).

The player has numerous Sihlangu caps under the guidance of various coaches



▲ Eswatini international Lindo Mkhonta. such as Kostadin Pasic, Dominik Kunene, Zdravko Logarusic, and the incumbent Sifiso ‘Nuro’Ntibane.

Group D:

Zamalek (Egypt)
Al Masry (Egypt)
Kaizer Chiefs (South Africa)
Zesco United (Zambia).



▲ Some of the participants during the basic coaching course held at Sigwaca House.

Ex-‘Birds’ Shobane Dube, Ezulwini’s Sonkhe for coaching

By **Chris Dlamini**

A new breed of football coaches is on the horizon.

It has transpired that the Eswatini Football Association’s (EFA) ongoing Basic Coaching Course, among others, has attracted administrators, former elite stars, and media personnel, among others.

Among these, particularly in the Hhohho Region, is elite side Ezulwini United’s General Manager (GM) Sonkhe Kuhlase and former Mbabane Swallows strong defender Shobane Dube. Hhohho Regional Football Association (HRFA) Chief Operations Officer (COO) Nkosinathi Dlamini is also part of the lessons. These are some of the notable names taking the Basic Coaching Course, which is normally three months but can be done in two, as revealed by the EFA Technical Director Boy ‘Bizzah’ Mkhonta on Sunday during the second day of learning.

Mkhonta counted Sebenle Hlatshwako

as one coming from the print media space alongside this article author.

Meanwhile, Kuhlase, when asked by the instructor in former Highlander’s assistant coach last season, Vusisizwe Mahlalela, said he wanted to dedicate his time focusing on his team’s development.

“We need someone qualified to guide our development team, so I thought it would be good if I have the technical know-how,” he said. He said it would also enhance his understanding of the game and further put him in a good position to advise accordingly his team management and directorship on technical issues.

Dube’s response was that he realised that his playing experience was no longer enough to grow him and his team Tipikili because he did not have the necessary basic knowledge.

Most of the upcoming coaches are already attached to teams, mainly at development and regional level. The course is expected to be done in about two months or less with the examination set for mid-December.

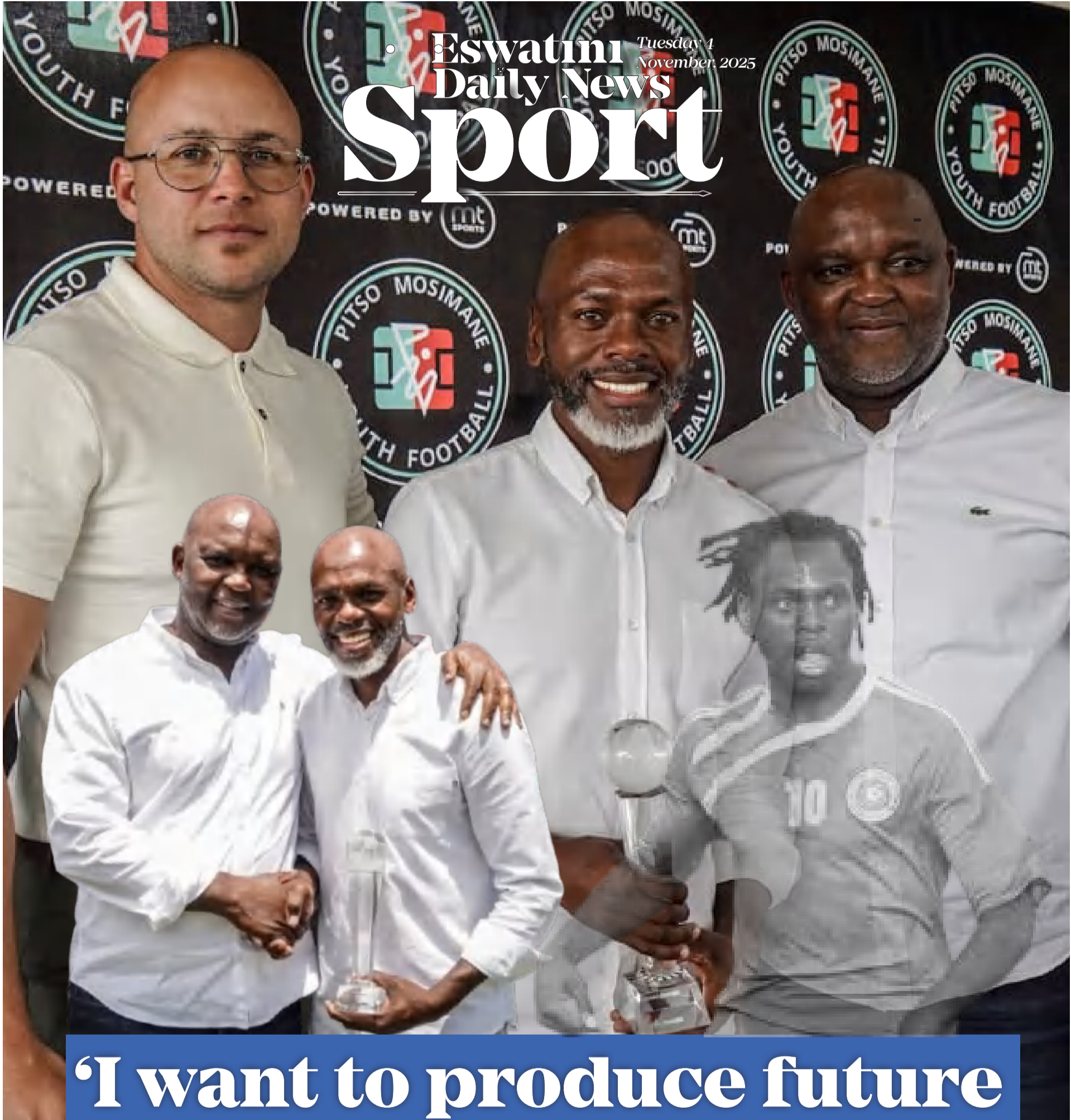


**Dembele
fit as PSG
prepare
for Bayern**

Page 20

**SA's Kaizer
Chiefs test for
Lindo Mkhonta**

Page 23



Eswatini Tuesday 4
November, 2025
Daily News
Sport

**‘I want to produce future
Sihlangu stars’ – ‘Yuki’**

● ... Sihlangu legend Dennis ‘Yuki’ Masina named best coach for the 2025 Pitso Mosimane Development Programme. **Page 23**